

THE
DENIAL;

OR, THE

HAPPY RETREAT.

A NOVEL.

VOL. II

MS
1711: a line

THE

DENIAL



CHAPTER

A NOVEL

VOL. II

THE
DENIAL;
OR, THE
HAPPY RETREAT.
A NOVEL.

By the Rev. JAMES THOMSON.

V O L. II.

Hoc patrium est, potius consuefacere filium
Suâ sponte rectè facere, quàm alieno metu.
Hoc pater ac dominus interest : hoc qui nequit,
Fateatur se nescire imperare liberis.

TERENT. in ADELPH.

'Tis this then is the duty of a father :
To make a son embrace a life of virtue
Rather from choice than terror or constraint,
Here lies the mighty difference between
A FATHER and A MASTER. He who knows not
How to do this, let him confess he knows not
How to rule children.

COLMAN.

L O N D O N :

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M,DCC,XCII.

THE
DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
ARTS AND CRAFTS
MANUFACTURE
IN THE
MIDDLE AGES
BY
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T H E
D E N I A L.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

S I R,

THE settled melancholy which had long taken possession of my mind begins to disperse, and a pleasing prospect opens to my view. Lately I saw nothing before me but wretchedness and anxiety, with the direful imprecation of an enraged father behind, gnawing, and preying, with rankling poison on every moment of my existence. But at this instant, I am all vivacity, all cheerfulness, all rapture; and perched on the highest pinnacle of expectation, I look forward, almost confident of success, to the happiness of being one day in the uninterrupted possession of my dear Olivia.

FEAR however sometimes intrudes its baneful influence, and abates the extacy which my inconsiderate hopes enjoy; and cool reflection, like a ravenous vulture,

VOL. II. B

ture, frequently tears away the rapturous conceptions of my mind, and exposes my joyful bosom to the fangs of bitterness and the glooms of sorrow.

O FATHER, father ! honourable name ! thou dear relation who gavest me being, what would I not give, what would I not sacrifice, to possess your venerable sanction, to be blessed with your approbation, to have your permission to pursue and finally complete my union with Olivia ; a union to which my soul is unalterably devoted, and in which my future peace and happiness is immediately involved !

SANGUINE as I am in my hopes, I cannot but recollect how many incidents may intervene, to counteract all my designs, to render all my schemes abortive, and leave me a miserable object of ridicule to others, and of disappointment to myself ! It is an unpardonable folly, an unwarrantable presumption, for the child of humanity to place his sole happiness on the fortunate completion of any single object, since a very trivial accident may destroy what his utmost attention may never be able to re-establish. So Reason dictates ; but Love and Reason are seldom associates.

To save myself the pain of further recollection, I walked forth. The cool and tranquil pleasures of the country were ever agreeable to me, and I felt their enjoyment at this moment with peculiar delight. The mild, the gentle beauties of the spring had given place to the more vivid and enlivening colours of summer, which now reigned in meridian glory. The herbage was exuberant ; and the whole face of nature enamelled with a thousand dyes, more rich, more variegated, and infinitely more lively than all the artificial splendour of the most superb ball-room. The tints of a thousand wild flowers, blended and softened

softened into all the varieties of light and shade, gave an exquisite and inexpressible harmony to the natural picture. The meadows waving with luxuriance, seemed to invite the sun-burnt hand of the mower; the trees, clad in their fullest foliage, formed a number of green and cooling shades, and afforded an agreeable retreat from the sultry rays of the almost vertical and glorious luminary of day.

IN the contemplation and enjoyment of these rural beauties, I arrived at the place where my pretty songster had built his habitation; and, silently examining the nest, I found the little family were gone. Uncertain of their fate, whether robbed by the pilfering hand of the wandering school boy, or hopping from spray to spray beneath the gentle auspices of their enraptured parents, I stopped and listened in hope of hearing his mellow note—I stopped and listened in vain—his note was mute—the melody of his music no more made vocal with his echoing strains the banks of the WANSBECK. “Pretty warbler!” I exclaimed, “how emblematical of my father! Bereft of thy offspring, perhaps thou mourest on some solitary bough, and pinest out the day in lamentations for thy irreparable loss!” I heard the shrill flecker of wings among the surrounding boughs. I looked round, and espied upon a bush of flowering hawthorn the two parent birds, accompanied with their young progeny. “Happy birds!” said I, “may your flight be an omen of my fate!”

THINK not, Benfield, that I am in the least tinctured with superstition; yet this little incident of perceiving them at liberty, when I was in suspense for their destiny, gave a relief to my mind, and dispelled that anxiety which I harboured for their safety. In these trifling observations I found inexpressible delight. When the mind is absorbed in difficulty,

and impressed with the heavy load of adversity, trifling incidents create entertainment, and diffuse a transient gleam of joy, which during the hours of peace and pleasure pass by unobserved.

STRUCK, as I was walking through the park, with the rotundity and magnificence of a very large plane tree, I stopped to indulge my admiration; its bole was enormous, and its branches rose in a regular conical figure to an amazing height. The day was warm, and as I was somewhat fatigued, I threw myself down upon the turf beneath its shade, with an intention of amusing myself with the perusal of my favourite *HORACE*. I opened the volume at that beautiful Ode which begins, "*Integer vita, scelerisque purus*," and had scarcely got through the second stanza, when I was accosted by Mr. Longford's well-known voice, asking, "Where is Olivia?"

I CALMLY answered, "I do not know, Sir."

HE fixed his eyes stedfastly on me, with a wildness in his look, and a terror in his countenance, which startled and alarmed me.

AFTER a little pause, he said, "You marry Olivia, who has been betrothed to me these two years! She often sits and reads under this tree. Happy tree! here it was I first saw her. Pray, Sir, inform me where she is: Lady Bertram told me she was in the park. Charles the second saved himself in an oak—But Mr. Fennell may not have told the truth—I will not yet believe him, for she is not here."

HAVING concluded this rhapsody he walked from me, with a hasty step. But being disconcerted with
the

the strangeness of his manner and the incoherence of his expressions, I shut my book, arose, and walked after him towards Bertram-Hall.

I FOUND him in the parlour with Sir Robert and Lady Bertram, enquiring with much earnestness for his dear Olivia.

SIR Robert looked seriously, first at his Lady, then at me, and, addressing himself to Mr. Longford, said, "I assure you, Sir, Olivia walked out above an hour ago. You are very conscious I can have no motive to deceive you."

"DECEIVE me!" replied Mr. Longford, "deceive me, Sir Robert! no, no, no. I wish we were married—but, Lady Bertram, you have often laughed when I have expressed my desire—Pray, Sir," addressing himself to me, "you do not mean to become my rival?—Cease, cease, your intention is in vain --Return, return: Northumberland will not be cozened by a stranger."

He then walked with alacrity across the floor, sometimes twirling his cane with much dexterity, sometimes gnawing it with his teeth, and frequently eyeing me with a wild indignant glance, which moved my pity. I silently commiserated the apparent perturbation of his mind.

SIR Robert desired him to be seated.

"—No, no," Sir Robert, "you encourage strangers---My estate is a good one---my rents are well paid---then what have I to fear!---Yet a woman is a slippery article, and few men can hold an eel by the tail. Desdemona did not use her

" Moor too faithfully ; witness the bloody handkerchief---Trust, trust---Mr. Wilton, you will not tell me a lye ?"

" Not willingly, Mr. Longford."

" Of what amount is your rent-roll ?

" As yet I have no estate, Sir ; my father is still living, and long may he enjoy it !"

" ENOUGH, enough," exclaimed he with much exultation, " two thousand pounds a year against nothing, Lady Bertram, is great odds---Victory, thou art yet my own---Mr. Wilton, you are a fallen star."

HIS loquacity was incessant ; and as I conceived that my presence, from the supposition he entertained of my being a rival, might irritate the perturbation of his mind, I took my leave and walked toward the Vicarage, to wait upon Mr. Brooke.

I WAS followed by Sir Robert. He overtook me, and said, " I am sorry to observe the increasing malady of poor Mr. Longford. He teazes Olivia, who, through mere good-nature, and in consideration of his unhappy infirmity, bears with his officiousness, and suffers, with a laudable patience, all his wandering inconsistencies."

" PRAY, Sir Robert, how long has he been afflicted with this mental derangement ?"

" I HAVE known him, Mr. Wilton, from his childhood ; but the origin of this infirmity is uncertain, for his earliest infancy was marked with
" many

" many eccentricities. As he advanced towards ma-
 " turity, I thought at different times his conduct be-
 " trayed many oddities; his behaviour was incon-
 " sistent, and his conversation frequently incoherent.
 " These observations were my own, and I was ten-
 " der in indulging them.

" ABOUT two years ago he saw Olivia at an as-
 " sembly, and became her captive. His addresses
 " she immediately and peremptorily refused; upon
 " which he discontinued his visits, confined himself
 " closely to his room, and sunk into the deepest me-
 " lancholy. As soon as I was informed of his pitia-
 " ble case, I paid him a visit, endeavoured to revive
 " his spirits by all the methods I could devise, and
 " told him Olivia should call upon him, if he would
 " promise to come and dine at Bertram-Hall. Af-
 " ter much sollicitation he complied. Olivia, in com-
 " pany with Lady Bertram and myself, called a few
 " days after. He seemed more cheerful and more
 " collected than when I saw him the preceding week.
 " The goodness of Olivia's heart needed no instruc-
 " tion. She was all attention to her unfortunate lo-
 " ver, and bore his civilities and his weaknesses with
 " that gentleness and decorum which manifestly indi-
 " cated the amiableness of her disposition.

" FROM this time his melancholy began to disperse,
 " and he gradually assumed a loquacious vivacity,
 " which is frequently a little irksome, but, consider-
 " ing his weakness, never disgusting. His attentions
 " have been invariable, and he hath long entertained
 " the opinion that he is to be married to Olivia.
 " Under this delusive impression, his sollicitations are
 " sometimes troublesome, and Mr. Fennell, merely
 " to indulge a malicious disposition, hath informed
 " him that you are going to deprive him of his be-

“ loved mistress. From this source arose his anxiety,
“ agitation, inquisitiveness, and incredulity, this
“ morning.”

SIR Robert ceased, when I replied, “ His mis-
“ fortune, Sir,—a derangement of the intellectual
“ powers—is the most melancholy and pitiable that
“ can afflict the human species. The more I reflect
“ upon the amiable condescension of Olivia in per-
“ mitting his assiduities, the more I admire and
“ praise her.”

WE arrived at the Vicarage, and upon our entrance into the parlour were struck with a scene of sorrow enough to soften the most obdurate heart. Mr. Brooke was sitting, grief and melancholy depicted upon his countenance, with his second son, my pretty little cowslip-gatherer, stretched at length upon his knee. Pale was the bloom upon his cheek, and dull was the lustre of his eye—the Angel of Death seemed to have touched him with his mortal wand—he lay cold and motionless.

MR. Brooke, with all the feelings of a tender father, was weeping over his child. The good man endeavoured, on our entering the room, to suppress his grief; but his attempt was vain; the glistening tears continued to course down his cheeks, to bedew the face of his dear babe, now insensible to their moisture. His other little son was leaning upon his knees, weeping and kissing his almost lifeless brother—and saying, “ No, indeed, papa, my brother William
“ shall not die”—and again he kissed his pallid lips.

CLOSE by Mr. Brooke sat my dear Olivia, lovely in her grief. She was attempting to administer consolation to the sorrowful father, though her eyes were
furcharged

surcharged with the liquid torrent, and her tongue faltered in its friendly office. "My pretty William," said she to Sir Robert, "is seized with a fever—" "Feel his pulse---it is flying--- My pretty cherub!" She could utter no more, but turned away her face and gave vent to her sorrow.

I FELT the sympathy of the general grief, and stepping to the lovely mourner, wiped the tears from her eyes, and wished to alleviate her woe for her little companion, while Sir Robert kindly endeavoured to console the afflicted father.

IN the mean time Mrs. Brooke entered the room, and without taking any notice of the danger of the child, or seeming at all affected by the general sorrow which had overspread every countenance, said, "Indeed, Mr. Brooke, you are to blame to grieve thus immoderately; the child will be better to-morrow---lay him on the bed."

"No, Mrs. Brooke, here let him lie---I will feel when the last cold touch seizes upon his cheek. ---I will shut his closing eye---and on my lips receive his parting breath---then, if you please, we will lay him for the last time upon his bed." The good man then kissed his child and wept. There was not a dry cheek in the room, except Mrs. Brooke's, who said, with much indifference, "Thus, Sir Robert, it is always with Mr. Brooke, who pretends to know better what to do with the children than I do, who am their mother."

"HUSH, hush," replied Sir Robert: "Have you sent for any advice?"

"I EXPECT the physician every minute," said Mr. Brooke.

THE physician entered; and while he was examining the child, I confess to you that I have seldom felt more anxiety than I did during this interval for the fate of the sweet little creature.

THE physician, upon enquiry, gave us hopes of the child's recovery, and desired that he might be put to bed.

"THERE, there," cried the good wife, "Mr. Brooke, you will never take my advice, although you see I am always in the right."

THE little patient was put to bed. His elder brother would not quit him; but with all the tenderness and affection imaginable insisted on sleeping with him. Pretty cherubs! may your affection increase with your years, and terminate only with your existence!

IT was now expedient for us to retire. I solicited Olivia for the pleasure of a walk in the park---she hesitated, without the permission of Sir Robert---and this I soon obtained. We separated; Sir Robert walked home to keep Mr. Longford company, while Olivia and I went to enjoy the pleasures of retirement beneath the shady covert of a row of branching pines.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER the receipt of the last letter from my beloved Antonet, the minutes seemed to go creeping forward, and with all the solicitude of an impatient lover I anxiously counted the striking of every hour. Sensible of my own impatience, and chiding the folly which could thus encourage it, to my inexpressible torment, I drawled away the time in indolence and expectation, till near the hour when I deemed it requisite to equip myself.

THE many wild imaginations and strange chimeras which took possession of my brain during this interval contributed, in some degree, to waste the most precious of all possessions, TIME, until the intervening moments were elapsed.

IF I had powers to describe, or you had patience to read, the fantastic schemes I projected, we might hereafter laugh very heartily at their frivolity and extravagance; but I assure you, that these mental vagaries, wild and fantastic as they now appear, were then extremely agreeable and pleasing; and I believe it is not uncommon for an active mind to be more highly delighted with its imaginary fancies than it would be if they were realized. This however was not my case.

THE long-expected hour at length arrived, when I was to put on the unaccustomed clothing of DISGUISE. I had entrusted an old confidential servant with the secret of my enterprize; and he readily engaged

to furnish me from the surplus of his own wardrobe with whatever I deemed necessary; and an old slouch hat, a half-worn drab coloured surtout coat, a blue plush waistcoat, and a pair of dirty leather breeches, formed the dress in which I was to make this honourable campaign.

My servant, according to my orders, had the horses ready by three o'clock at the appointed place; and passing privately through my garden, I mounted and rode the nearest way to Wilton-Wood. I alighted about half a mile distant from the Cottage, and ordered my attendant to take the horses back to a little ale-house which we had passed on the road, and to meet me again precisely at seven. He promised to be punctual, and departed.

Musing and alone, I entered the Wood; but whether from a consciousness of being disguised, or from an idea that there was a want of rectitude in my present proceeding, or from whatever other motive it might result, I cannot tell, yet I felt a trepidation of mind to which I had before been a total stranger. The smallest rustling of the leaves, the creaking of the branches, even the sudden flutter of a startled bird, appalled me.

As I advanced farther into the Wood, this timidity abated, and I arrived at last at the Cottage. Upon enquiry, I was informed that the ladies had not been there, and, on examining my watch, I perceived that I had anticipated the appointed time full half an hour.

THE owner of the little mansion desired me to walk in, saying, "The ladies will be here presently."

I LOOKED

I LOOKED attentively upon her, when she continued: "Be not surpris'd, Sir, that I know who you are, and the nature of your errand; for Lady Wilton sent me word to-day, that she and my sweet lovely child would be here this evening at five o'clock, and requested that I would not give admittance to any one but Mr. Benfield, who would probably come disguised."

I THANKED the good woman for her civility, and walked in. She was liberal and profuse in praises of her lady and child; and though she chatted away, without intermission, upon this favourite topic, so much was I absorbed in the contemplation of my adventure, that I hardly remember one syllable of all she said.

At last a rap was heard at the door.

I STARTED from my reverie with the same alacrity as if I had been springing from the bite of the mortal adder; and before I recovered, Lady Wilton and my lovely Antonet entered the room.

"I SEE," said your mother smiling, "that you are punctual, Mr. Benfield, to a minute."

"YES, Madam," paying my obeisance to her, and at the same time taking my charmer by the hand, "punctuality to an assignation is nothing more than what is due, when so much merit and perfection condescend to meet my attention."

"COMPLIMENTS," said Antonet, "Mr. Benfield, are to me unnecessary, because unmerited. Truth is always a welcome visitant, except where vanity reigns supreme in the female mind."

"VANITY,

“ VANITY, my Antonet, I am very confident, is not predominant in your mind, or in the least characteristic of your general behaviour.”

“ COME, come,” said Lady Wilton, “ time is precious, let not one moment of it be wasted in complimentary and unmeaning expressions. Behind the cottage there is a snug little garden, close fenced with a hawthorn hedge ; thither you may retire for an hour. I will in the mean time amuse myself with Jane’s devotional books, while she walks to and fro in the path that leads directly to Wilton-Park, in order that she may give us intelligence, if she espy any one coming towards the Wood of whom she is suspicious. Precaution is necessary to prevent detection ; and as such an interview cannot, with propriety, be repeated, I hope the present will pass unknown.”

SHE ceased.

WE bowed, and retired.

THE garden was small, and well enclosed. In one corner of it was a rustic seat concealed from observation by intertwining branches of woodbine and the wild briar ; the roses of which, being now in full bloom, gave beauty and fragrance to this sequestered spot. Thither I led and seated my charming Antonet, and passing my arms around her waist, pressed her to my panting bosom, and impressed a modest kiss upon her unreluctant lips. The ardour of my embrace and the unexpected salute covered her face with crimson blushes, and threw her into visible confusion ; when, casting a smile of sweetness and complacence upon me, she said, “ Had not experience convinced me of your honour, my delicacy, Mr. Benfield, would not have suffered such familiarities.”

“ If,

“ IF, my angel, I have offended you by my freedom, let me intreat your forgiveness upon my knee, and let my unvarying love plead an exemption from your censure.”

“ RISE, Benfield, and plead not to me for pardon. Such formalities are totally inconsistent with our attachment.”

“ I HOPE, my Antonet, our attachment is founded upon a surer basis than to be shaken by an embrace of innocence and affection. But oh, Antonet, how long must I live in hope, how long be tormented with this miserable suspense? Why treat me with this constant cruelty?”

“ SAY not so, Mr. Benfield; you are sufficiently apprized of my motive; I hope it is an honourable one. I have not concealed from you the very inmost recesses of my heart, but have made you, without the least hesitation, the confidant of my thoughts, and the arbiter of all my actions. Do not then accuse me of cruelty; it forms no part of my conduct towards you.”

“ WILL you, my Antonet, in your goodness towards me, give me a definitive answer, how long I must live in this unhappy state of anxiety and despair? Informed of this, I may look forward with the transports of joy to the completion of the term which is to confirm my earthly happiness.”

“ ON this, Sir, I am not able to determine; but were I at liberty to bestow my hand where I have long bestowed my heart, you should not solicit in vain another hour.”

“ HEAVEN

“ HEAVEN bless my angel, and record her declaration ! What, oh what restrains your present liberty ! Will the dull, tedious ceremony of still asking the consent of a parent, who is determined to remain inflexibly obstinate, prevent you from participating and conferring that felicity which our union alone can grant us ? ”

“ ASPERSE not, Benfield, the conduct of a man who is my parent ; he gave me life, cherished my helpless infancy, carefully led my unexperienced years up to maturity, and kindly indulged me in every wish, except that which has long been an enemy to my peace. ”

“ I HAVE long, my love, been taught my duty from your lips, and am ever ready to assent to their dictates ; but consent, let me once call you mine, and I will listen with the attention of a lover to all your instructions, and daily bless you for your sweet condescension. ”

HERE again I pressed her to my bosom—stole a kiss from her ruby lips, and added, “ Why, my Antonet, should we separate any more ? Our hearts are already united ; let us by a legal sanction join our hands, and taste of that happiness to which our constancy hath so well entitled us. ”

By an involuntary motion she rested her cheek against mine—I tenderly embraced her, while she continued thus : “ My Benfield, I would, yes, I am willing to reward your constancy, could I meet your affection upon terms of equality, and bring myself to a resolution to part with my beloved parent. She knows the anguish of my mind---it
“ has

" has wrung her heart---but shall I leave her? Venerable parent, forgive the thought! Oh Benfield, cease the request---leave her!"

HER utterance stopped---I felt the warm tears come trickling down her cheek---I kissed them away as they fell---she sobbed deeply.

To see the dear object of all my wishes in this agony was more than I could bear---I caught the infection, and poured my sorrows into her bosom: she looked up and perceived my agitation; then throwing her arms around me, said, " Oh Benfield, this is too much---dry up your tears. I am and will be your's."

THIS kind declaration did not relieve me---I answered with a tender embrace, and rested my head upon her bosom.

THUS silent and weeping we were surprised by Lady Wilton, who said, with the utmost tenderness, " My children, why thus involved in sorrow?"

I RAISED my head at the interrogation, whilst Antonet turned her's away, and vainly attempted to conceal her blushes.

" OH LADY Wilton," I returned, " we are miserable and unhappy---let us separate no more---here upon my knees I solicit your consent, which will terminate a wretchedness that has long rendered existence a burden."

LADY Wilton replied, " Rise, Mr. Benfield. But what says my Antonet? Does your heart join in this petition for my consent?"

" Mr

“ MY honourable parent, you have long known
“ the wishes of my heart.”

“ THEN, my dear children, may the God of
“ Mercies bless, keep, and make you happy ! May
“ his providence protect you through this weary
“ pilgrimage of life, and may you be as happy as
“ the hopes of a tender mother can wish you !”

TAKING my angel by the hand, we both dropped
upon our knees, and thanked this kind parent for her
maternal benediction.

THE scene, Wilton, was affecting—I saw the
struggle which Lady Wilton made to conceal her emo-
tion; and whilst the tear stood glistening in her eye,
she said, “ My children, we must part—the evening
“ steals upon us.”

“ PART ! Madam,” exclaimed I, “ no, never
“ more.”

“ IT is indispensably requisite, Mr. Benfield ; my
“ reasons are many and various—you shall know
“ them to-morrow. In the mean time, measures
“ may be concerted to facilitate your union without
“ the dread of a discovery. A few days can make
“ little difference, and matters are not yet fully ma-
“ tured for the completion of your desires.”

I TACITLY assented to her commands, from a
conviction that she was much more capable of deter-
mining what was expedient in this exigence than my-
self, and after a mutual interchange of unfeigned ci-
vilities we separated once more.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

I BEGIN now to think that my affection will be rewarded, and my unwearied constancy crowned with success. You know how indefatigable I have been in the perseverance of my attachment to your amiable sister; who having in vain tried by time and ineffectual solicitation to soften the obduracy of her parent, and to gain his acquiescence to her inclination, seems at last resolved to act in her own cause with vigour, and to do herself that justice which a father denies her, without assigning any other reason than an unwarrantable obstinacy. In this resolution may propitious Heaven confirm and establish her! The sacrifice she has at length determined to make, I hope, will never be repented of. It shall be my constant care through life to soothe the anxiety of her days, and dispel the sorrow which may embitter her sleepless nights.

ANXIETY and sorrow are, in a certain degree, the portion of mortals; I am not therefore so presumptuous as to suppose that we shall be blessed with a particular exemption. But it is our duty, whenever the blighting touch of woe dispels our present peace, to bear without a sullen murmur whatever chastisement Providence may inflict.

IN pursuance of your honourable mother's cautions last night, I repaired as before to the Cottage in the Wood, where I received the two following letters, which I have carefully transcribed, in order to preserve the originals.

FROM

FROM THE HON. LADY WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

S I R,

I HAVE weighed maturely your proposal, and, being confident of the impracticability of obtaining Lord Wilton's consent, have informed my dear child, that she has my permission to complete her happiness, whenever she has fortitude to put it in execution.

THE duty and tenderness of my Antonet are so conspicuous, and so frequently manifested, by her endeavours to alleviate my sorrows, that no temporal consideration could have induced me at this time to comply with your solicitation, and give sanction to a measure which will separate me from the child of my affections; but I have long observed the roses fading upon her cheek, and the lively glow of health which once sparkled in her eyes grow dim and faint. The cheerful flow of spirits which distinguished her character, and rendered her the agreeable companion of all who knew her, has long subsided, and her vivacity is now rather the forced effect of her desire to please, than of her natural temper. I have long been acquainted with the sensibility of her heart, and have daily watched for opportunities to convince her that I was not unfriendly to its softest feelings. By this conduct I gained her entire confidence, and she opened to me, without reserve, the recesses of a heart which I am sure is capable of the firmest friendship and the tenderest love. She has long devoted her attention to the mitigation of my anxieties, whilst I have contributed to the alleviation of her's. The conflict between her duty and affection hath been strenuous.

strenuous and lasting; but, alas! her tender frame can no longer support such convulsive efforts, and she must inevitably sink beneath the impending trial. This fatal truth has compelled me to coincide with your urgent wishes, and willingly to give her to your arms, rather than see her drop by a slow but certain gradation into the dreary regions of the grave, a cold companion for the solitary worm.

THEN, Benfield, take her, and may the just God of Heaven bless you with her! And that my dear Antonet may be more happy in her earthly union than ever her parent experienced, shall be the morning and evening prayer of

L. W.

FROM THE HON. MISS WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

AFTER a severe struggle between my duty and affection, the latter hath prevailed, and I am now fully determined to bid adieu to Wilton-Park, and place myself under the protection of the man on whom my affections have been long fixed.

THE behaviour of my father is actually become intolerable, and would provoke the meekest spirit to resist his tyranny. The motives which induce him to treat his unoffending family with such unceasing severity, I am unable to divine; but there is certainly some secret passion rankling in his breast, which will impel his avowed resentments against my unfortunate brother beyond the limits of moderation or decency.

I URGE

I URGE not this circumstance as a palliative for my disobedience. I have considered the nature of my offence, and am aware of the consequences. Will you not, Benfield, one day reproach me with my rashness, and charge my affection to you with a want of duty to my parent? The idea of such a charge, if it were possible, would inflict a deeper wound upon my aching heart, already torn with the conflicting pangs of nature and the soft attractions of all-subduing love. But I will confide in your affection, and trust to that source for an alleviation of every misery. I have long, solely for my unvarying attachment to you, endured the harshness of rebuke, and the asperity of insult, from one whose authority I never questioned, and whose dictates to me were long received as the irrefragable conclusions of the most sacred laws. I have lived in hope, vainly expecting that time would ameliorate what it could not entirely relieve; I have been disappointed; and hope itself is now extinguished. I have, therefore, at length determined to seek that happiness from which I have been long an alien.

My dear mother and I were much terrified last night after our return from the Wood, under an apprehension that my father had discovered our assignation, as a few minutes after our return we received a summons to attend him in the parlour. The perturbation of our minds would have led to an immediate discovery, had he harboured any suspicion of our culpability, and it was some time before our fears subsided.

As soon as we were seated, my father addressing himself to my mother, said, "Madam, I have not for some time past troubled you with any interrogatories relative to our ungrateful son, who, to
 " add

“ add to his disobedience, hath never thought proper
“ to acquaint me with the place of his retreat. From
“ your apparent tranquillity, and visible composure
“ of mind, I am apt to conclude that you are
“ apprized of what I want to know ; I therefore re-
“ quest you to inform me where I can direct a letter
“ to him, as I have some business of the utmost im-
“ portance to transact with him.”

“ PRAY, my Lord,” replied my mother, “ what
“ induces you to form such a conclusion ?”

“ A TRUCE with your quibbles, Madam, and
“ give me a plain answer to a plain question ; do
“ you or do you not know where Henry is ? Let
“ not the veracity of which you have so frequently
“ boasted forsake you in this instance, but speak
“ without equivocation or reserve.”

My mother answered, “ You are too hasty, my
“ Lord, in stopping me thus abruptly, without hear-
“ ing what I was going to say. I did not mean to
“ equivocate, but to tell you in plain terms, that I do
“ know where he is, and am happy to know he is in
“ health.”

My father answered, “ And so, Madam, you
“ have carried on a secret correspondence with our
“ undutiful boy ever since his departure ! Your neg-
“ lecting to disclose to me the place of his retreat is
“ an infraction of your duty.”

“ You are mistaken, my Lord, and might have
“ omitted your censure of my swerving from my
“ duty.”

“ MISTAKEN !”

“MISTAKEN!” exclaimed he, “how! You
“acknowledge that you know where he is; and how
“came you to acquire this knowledge, if not by
“an epistolary correspondence?”

“You may credit my assertion, my Lord, that
“I have never received one letter from him, or
“even a verbal message, since his departure.”

“THEN, Antonet, you must be the medium
“through which your mother’s intelligence comes.”

“BELIEVE me, my Lord, I have not been fa-
“voured with one syllable from my brother since he
“left Wilton-Park.”

“No! hum.”

AFTER a sudden pause, he said, “Inform me
“then by what channel you have had your infor-
“mation.”

“THAT, my Lord, I will readily do, if you
“will inform me of the nature of the business you
“have to transact with him.”

“No terms, Madam: I insist on your informa-
“tion unconditionally, and then, as my business is
“not of such a private nature but you may know of
“it, I shall probably acquaint you with it.”

“THE channel by which we have our information
“is Mr. Benfield.”

“BENFIELD! Ha! Antonet, still a traitor to
“my authority! I supposed that connection had
“been finally annihilated.”

THE disorder and emotion which this exclamation created in my mind, almost deprived me of the power of reflection ; and I began to frame an apology for my disobedience ; but a moment's recollection banished that idea, and shewed me the extreme absurdity of such a procedure. I fear, however, that my confusion betrayed my guilt ; for my father fixed his eyes upon me with a smile of ineffable contempt.

My mother proceeded to acquaint him with Henry's place of residence.

" Now, Madam," replied my father, " I shall inform you of my business with him. His disobedience in opposing my will has so alienated him from my affection, that I purpose to deprive him of his paternal inheritance—Nay, start not, Madam, I am determined—I have consulted the first legal authority, and although some impediments intervene, which may be removed without his acquiescence, yet as his consent will expedite the business, I mean to make him an offer of ten thousand pounds for it, upon his finally relinquishing all future claim to the paternal estate."

" You are not serious, my Lord ?"

" SERIOUS and determined, Madam, and shall immediately send him my proposal, which if he dare to reject, let him abide by the consequences."

SAYING this, he left the room, while we sat staring upon one another with the utmost astonishment and consternation.

AFTER a silence of some seconds, my honoured mother said, " A gleam of hope breaks in upon my
VOL. II. C mind,

“ mind, and dissipates the gloom which this abominable resolution had cast upon it. So inveterate is his father’s revenge against my unhappy son, that were it practicable to break the entail without his acquiescence, I am confident Lord Wilton would never condescend to consult him. I hope therefore that Henry, from a veneration to the antiquity of his family, as well as a regard to his own honour and dignity, will never consent to so dishonourable a sacrifice for the paltry consideration of ten thousand pounds. I will immediately acquaint him with my thoughts upon the subject; and, lest he should hesitate, dissuade him, if possible, from so base and degenerate a compliance.”

I REPLIED, “ Your conduct on this occasion is laudable and praise-worthy; but as Mr. Benfield carries on a constant correspondence with Henry, I will to-morrow acquaint him with your sentiments, by which means you may hereafter be exculpated from the charge of influencing Henry’s determination, who, I am confident, will reject the proposal with the utmost disdain.”

“ My dear child, I will follow your advice; it is not likely you will be long here to give it.—*You* have a friend—but to whom shall I complain?—I have already made up my mind for your happiness, I will not therefore disturb it by any feminine complaints.”

ON Thursday evening, at eight o’clock, accompanied only by my maid, I will meet you in the Wood behind the Cottage. Let our conveyance to Scotland be as expeditious as possible, and in our return we will surprise Henry in his Hermitage on the banks of the Wansbeck. I have not even acquainted

Sophy

Sophy with my resolution, lest by a discovery of her knowledge of it she might hereafter incur her father's hatred. Write no more, but be punctual to the assignation of

Your ever faithful

A. WILTON.

THUS, Wilton, you see that you are likely to have visitants sooner than you expected from this country. Ten thousand pounds! A poor equivalent indeed for a title and a large estate! Lady Wilton hath conjectured right---That if no impediments had occurred, you would never have been acquainted with the business. This proposal seems to be the last resource of disappointed malice; but let the worst happen, my fortune and estate are at your command, to do yourself that justice which a father seems determined to deny you.

UNTIL the receipt of this letter, I never knew what it was to be happy. Rejoice with me, for I will sign myself your fortunate brother

J. BENFIELD.

LETTER XXXVI.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

I AM at this present moment confined to my chamber, wounded, disappointed, and overwhelmed with the utmost horror and confusion. The pain proceeding from a wound which I have received in my shoulder is indeed slight and trivial, when compared to the excruciating torment I feel every moment, from the uncertainty of the fate of my beloved Antonet.

I CONCLUDED my last in rapture; and vainly imagined that Fortune, however inauspicious, could not in so short a time have so completely and perfectly destroyed my happiness. I was, alas! miserably mistaken; and my former anxiety, which I suffered for years, was light in comparison of my present anguish.

AFTER the receipt of the welcome letter which ordered me to be in readiness on the appointed evening at eight o'clock, I immediately began my preparations with the utmost alacrity and secrecy, not even acquainting one servant I have with the destination of his orders. To my venerable father alone I communicated my happiness, by shewing him your mother and sister's letters; and he cheerfully expressed his satisfaction by saying, "I now hope to see you happy
" in the possession of an amiable partner, before my
" evening sun of life shall set to rise no more. The
" happiest action of my dying tongue will be to give
" both of you a father's blessing; and if you prove as
" fortunate in your choice as I was, you will have
" sufficient cause to bless the day which gave Miss
" Wilton to your arms."

HE stopped—I saw the glistening tear steal down his furrowed cheek:—he hastily wiped it away, and observing my emotion said, "My dear John,
" forgive me; the recollection of former pleasures,
" of happy scenes, and of her who is gone before
" me, frequently melt me into tenderness and sorrow."

I CONSOLED him with the expectation of those happy days which he had yet to enjoy in the company of his charming daughter. He shook his head, as significant of the futility of my prediction.

I THEN

I THEN left him, and saw every thing with my own eyes immediately performed which I directed ; and so intoxicated was I with the coming bliss, that I requested the same thing to be done twice, thrice, nay even more times, and was surprised when I was told it was done according to directions. I was all impatience, and thought Thursday never before so tardy in its revolution. I walked to and fro, commanded and countermanded, and such was my agitation, that no other subject could find the least admission into my mind.

THE long wished-for day arrived. At three o'clock in the afternoon I ordered my post-chaise with four horses to be put to immediately. My coachman and postillion were to drive us for the first stage, when we proposed to change horses, and to send my own horses home again. I then called my valet, and acquainted him with my design.

He smiled, and said, " I would give half a year's wages to see Lord Wilton when he first misses his daughter."

" Go, see if they are ready."

He returned in an instant, and I followed. Having entered the chaise, I ordered them to drive a different road from that which leads directly to Wilton-Wood ; and by an easy pace I protracted nearly the intermediate time, until we came to the north part of the Wood, just behind the Cottage, at nearly half past seven o'clock.

I HERE waited with that impatience, with that anxiety, which nothing but the most ardent passion could experience, for near the other half hour ; and then walked into the Wood.

THE evening was still and gloomy—the ebon shades of approaching night spread a horror through the darkened scene, which alarmed and almost chilled my fortitude. I approached the Cottage with the utmost silence, and heard nothing there except the shril yelping of a little dog within. I rapped, and the door was immediately opened. I enquired if Miss Wilton was there, and was answered in the negative ; at the same time the good woman expressed her surprise that Miss Wilton should be expected in the Wood, when the night was so near approaching. I wished to walk along the path which leads to Wilton-Park ; but, being unacquainted with it, was afraid, lest I might miss the road, and Antonet might arrive in my absence. I walked therefore into the Cottage, and waited a few minutes, which seemed to me as so many hours. I stepped to the door five times every five minutes ; and such was my uneasiness at the supposed delay, that the mistress of the mansion expressed her surprise by saying, “ I wish, Sir, your intention may be good to-night : I am afraid you expect my dear young Lady, to carry her off ; which if you do, you will break the good Lady Wilton’s heart.”

THE little dog gave a solitary bark.

I SPRANG to the door, and listened with the utmost attention ; but as nothing appeared, I again walked in.

THE little centinel again gave warning with more eagerness than before—again I looked out—he ran along the path which led from the door—I followed him. About one hundred yards from it I heard some footsteps—I ran forward with ardour ; but what

was

was my ecstasy, when I met my charming Antonet and her maid walking with a very quick pace towards the Cottage.

I ADDRESSED her with rapture, when she said, "Oh Benfield, where is the carriage? I am fatigued and panting with walking so fast."

I ANSWERED, "It is behind the Cottage."

SHE asked me a variety of questions; at what time I came to the Wood? how long I had waited? and such like, until we arrived at the door of our friendly little mansion. The mistress of it was there—she invited us in. I objected.—My Antonet said, "One minute will not delay us---let us have her blessing. Jane, I confide in your secrecy."

"My dear Lady, do not mistrust me, and may the God of Heaven bless you! Oh Mr. Benfield, be kind to my child!" She took hold of her hand, eagerly kissed it, and be-dewed it with her tears.

My angel was dressed in a green habit, with a white hat and feather. I thought she never looked half so charming---her visible disorder, and the rapid flow of her spirits, had spread a softness over her features which charmed and captivated me.

IMPATIENT to be gone, I took her by the hand, put my arm round her waist, and led her, not unwilling, to the spot where the carriage waited.

ALL was silent---Night was spreading her ebon mantle over the verdant surface, and covering every object with the gloom of darkness. We had arrived at the north hedge, which separated us from our conveyance, when a sudden rushing noise from the thicket alarmed us.

"ALAS, Benfield!" exclaimed my Antonet.

I LOOKED round with horror, bidding her not to be afraid.

IN an instant the well-known terrific voice of Lord Wilton assailed our ears.

"STOP, villain! where is my daughter?"

SHE screamed, and dropped senseless into my arms.

I ATTEMPTED to rush forward to the chaise, with the lifeless burden in my arms, but was immediately surrounded by a number of persons; one of whom I could just distinguish to be Lord Wilton, who endeavoured to force your sister from my arms.

"TRAITOROUS wretch!" exclaimed he, "quit your hold, or your life shall pay the forfeit of your presumption;" and at the same instant he presented a pistol to my head.

MY servants, alarmed at the noise, came rushing forward to the assistance of their master. William my valet, on coming up, observing me with the lady in my arms, and Lord Wilton holding a pistol to my forehead, threatening with the most dreadful imprecations to sacrifice my life to his wrath, in a fit of desperation, not aware of the consequences, struck Lord Wilton on the arm which held the pistol, with the butt-end of his heavy whip. - The force of the stroke lowered his arm; the pistol fired. I made a second attempt to force my way to the carriage with my lovely burden; but I perceived that my right arm had lost its powers, and being no longer able to keep its hold, your sister fell upon the grass. In
rushing

rushing past Lord Wilton, I got a few paces from him ; and at the instant that Antonet dropped from my arms, he fired his other pistol, I hope without injury to any individual present : then, and not before, I heard the shrill screams of a female voice, " Alas ! my Lady, my murdered Lady !" Lord Wilton and two of his attendants immediately seized upon my lifeless Antonet, and were bearing her off, when William exclaimed, " Sir, where are your pistols ? Let us not lose the prize thus." I attempted to feel for my pistols ; but found that my right arm was stiff, motionless, and extremely painful. I walked up however to Lord Wilton, and taking him by the arm with my left hand, said, " My Lord, your bloody purpose is, I trust, disappointed---your forfeit life is now at my mercy---surrender to me your daughter, or---"

" STAND off, villain !" he exclaimed, shoving me from him.

I STAGGERED ; but, although I felt myself unaccountably weak, I again stopped him--again he pushed me from him with greater fury than before. I reeled and fell. I attempted to rise ; but was utterly unable ; and the pain in my shoulder increased to a most excruciating degree. Whilst I lay upon the ground I heard the noise of a violent scuffle, mixed with the most horrid imprecations. I called loudly to my servants, but I called in vain. After a few minutes the noise, I thought, approached ; but the pain I suffered was now so acute, that in my struggle to rise I put up my hand insensibly to the place, and found that my shirt was steeped in blood--a giddiness seized me, and I supposed I was going to faint.

At this instant I heard my angel scream out, " Oh, Benfield, help, help !"

AGAIN I made an effort to rise, but was unable. The bustle approached the place where I was lying: William it seems had got possession of the well-contested prize, and was bearing her in his arms towards the carriage; whilst my coachman, a robust brawny fellow, supported by the postillion, beat their assailants back, who seemed very timorous, and loth to come to a close encounter.

“VILLAINS, traitors, cowards!” Lord Wilton kept bawling, “rescue my daughter.---Were but my pistols charged!”—

WILLIAM cried out, “Here, Sir, here is the sweet Lady! Shall I place her in the carriage?”

“I THANK you, William; but I am afraid your valour hath been exerted in vain.---Let Lord Wilton have his daughter---his rashness hath probably deprived me of life.”

HIS Lordship seized the lovely creature, insensible as she still continued, and bore her instantly away. No sooner was she gone, than shame, rage, madness, and despair, threw me into a momentary stupefaction, daring the continuance of which I was placed by my servants in the carriage. The jolting of the carriage as we passed along recovered my recollection, and I found myself supported by William. “Whither are we going?” said I.

“To Benfield-Hall, Sir,” answered William, “as fast as we can drive.”

I REMEMBER nothing more that occurred during our continuance on the road; for I was rendered insensible by a tumult of contending passions, the torment

ment of pain, and an effusion of blood. When the carriage stopped, I asked where we were?

“At home, Sir,” said William; and lights being brought, I was lifted out of the carriage, and borne to my chamber.

My venerable father met us in the passage, and seeing me carried by my attendants, cried out, “Alas, my son!” Coming nearer, and perceiving me covered with blood, he fell senseless by my side. The sight of a lifeless parent for a while suspended my torments, and I desired the servants to set me down, that they might attend to my father, who was instantly carried to his chamber.

I DESIRED that a surgeon might be sent for with all imaginable speed. “That is already done;” replied William; “for Robert, as soon as he alighted at the door, remounted a fresh horse, and as he hath not above two miles to ride, we may soon expect his return.”

“THANKS, my good William, for your care: I hope I shall live to reward you for it.”

I WAS then removed to my chamber. William wished to have my coat and waistcoat taken off. “Hold, let me know how my honoured father is, before you proceed any farther!”

My honoured father came into the room, pale and trembling, whilst I was speaking. Taking hold of my hand, he said, “Alas, my son, is this your wedding-night! Is this the joy which I promised myself from your happy union! Had my aged limbs been mouldering in the grave before this

“ had happened, I should have escaped some days
“ of misery. Wretched old man ! unfortunate son ! ”

His grief stopped his utterance, and he bathed my face with his tears. I could raise but one arm, with which I clasped him round the neck, and pressed his venerable face to mine. Thus enlocked in the embraces of my afflicted parent, who poured his sorrows into my bosom, I found a passage for my own.

THE surgeon was announced.

I REQUESTED my attendants to remove my father to another room, during the examination of the wound. He said, “ No, John, not so ; no power
“ on earth shall remove me from your bed-side until
“ I know the worst ; the sooner I know it the better.”

I DESIRED the surgeon to proceed. He began to undress me, but was obliged to cut away the sleeve of my coat, as my arm could not be moved. My loss of blood seemed to alarm him ; for my clothes were drenched in it. Upon probing the wound, the ball was found to be lodged in it, which, he said, must be immediately extracted. I told him I was prepared for the operation.

“ PRAY, Sir,” said my father, “ inform me
“ faithfully, do you apprehend any danger from the
“ wound ? ”

“ I HOPE not, Mr. Benfield ; compose yourself,
“ and retire.”---He obeyed.

MR. Lambton then proceeded to the operation ; for, Robert having informed him of the accident, he had

had come prepared with proper instruments for the occasion. The ball was soon extracted—the wound dressed, and I laid carefully in bed ; but I could get no rest, being seized with a strong delirium, which continued through the night to an advanced hour of the morning, when it abated, and I fell into a composed and refreshing sleep.

SUCH, Wilton, has been the first day of my intended marriage. A day which I vainly deemed the happiest in my life hath proved the most unfortunate. My feelings, however, are not for myself—I totally forget my own pain, when I think on the fate of my dear suffering angel.---But yet I will hope ; for though the surgeon shakes his head, and looks wondrous *grave*, I believe I shall rise again, though at present I find myself extremely weak and faint.

WILLIAM is my amanuensis.

LETTER XXXVII.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

THE intelligence you have communicated in your last has astonished and alarmed me. As the delirium however has happily subsided, and you have felt no return of the fever, there is, I trust, a great probability of a fortunate and speedy cure. From your accurate detail of the circumstances, I conclude your wound was received when William, in his fury, struck Lord Wilton over the arm, by which the pistol might be discharged, even involuntarily. Not that I wish to exculpate my father from his unwarrantable

warrantable rashness, in presenting a loaded pistol to your forehead, being too well acquainted with the impetuosity of his passions; yet this unfortunate accident seems to have been the effect of your valet's courage.

I AM puzzled to conceive how my father got intelligence of your elopement. Your total silence on the subject has somewhat amazed me, though I suppose the confusion of your mind, the pain of your wound, and the more acute pain resulting from your disappointment, may have occasioned this forgetfulness. My honoured mother would never have derogated so far from her wonted probity, as to be capable of so flagrant a deception. My sister was unacquainted with your design; of consequence, she could not discover it. There are only two persons of whom I can have the least suspicion; these are, my sister's maid, who accompanied her, and the good woman in the Wood. However, as the whole transaction seems to be enveloped in an impenetrable mystery, I shall suspend my opinion until I hear farther from you on the subject; as to hazard a conjecture on such uncertainty would not only be vague and fruitless, but might involve innocence in the charge of guilt.

I HAD apprized Sir Robert, Lady Bertram, and Olivia, of your intention; and likewise, how you purposed on your return to honour me with a visit at my little hermitage. They expressed their satisfaction at the resolution of my sister, and the amiable resignation of my worthy parent. Lady Bertram was quite enraptured with the thought of entertaining the fair runaway for a few days at Bertram-Hall; and said cavalierly, that she would not have carried her duty so far as to have destroyed the peace of a lover's mind,

mind; and protracted her own happiness, but would have eloped with him she loved although her father had followed with a loaded pistol to the foot of the altar; there would she have taken an asylum, and claimed all the sacred privilege of sanctuary.

SIR Robert laughed at her Quixotism, whilst Olivia smiled at the romantic bravery of her declaration. But how were they astonished when I informed them of your disaster! Consternation appeared on every face, and every symptom of surprize and disappointment was visibly manifested.

SIR Robert was remarkably serious, and enquired how Lord Wilton had discovered the enterprize.

LADY Bertram extolled the courage and fidelity of William, and said, "Had not Don Quixote been unfortunately wounded in the beginning of the battle, he must inevitably have carried off his charming Dulcinea."

OLIVIA was grave to an extreme:—the pearly drop stood glistening in her eye whilst she exclaimed, "Poor Miss Wilton!"

"O RIGHT," exclaimed Lady Bertram, "you have not informed us what is become of the Lady."

"THEREIN, Madam, is my own perplexity; for of her destiny I am totally ignorant. The severity of her doom, I am afraid, will be lasting and pungent."

"OLIVIA," said Lady Bertram, "would you suffer with impunity?"

I KNOW

"I KNOW not, Madam, how I should act, were I
 " in Miss Wilton's case ; the dread of misfortune is
 " frequently more horrible than the misfortune it-
 " self."

"Now, Wilton, she is going to philosophize ; and
 " were I not to laugh her out of this gravity often
 " in a day, we should have nothing but sentiment
 " and religion for our entertainment from morning
 " till night."

"AND pray, my Lady," said Sir Robert, "is it
 " not the most elegant and rational entertainment of
 " which the human mind can participate ?"

"Now Bishop Bertram," replied my Lady, "is go-
 " ing to sermonize. Pray Doctor, where is your
 " text ? Olivia, you will say Amen at the conclu-
 " sion. I will forfeit my woman's judgement, if
 " Miss Wilton would not prefer her Benfield's arms
 " to all the sermons that ever Tillotson wrote."

"COME, Olivia," answered Sir Robert, "she is
 " now in her frolicksome mood, and will laugh us
 " out of the most serious subject ; let us recur to the
 " original topic, and bewail the unlucky mishap of
 " the unfortunate lovers."---They lamented your ca-
 " lamity, and wished you a speedy and better success.

INDEED, Benfield, I grieve for your aged father.
 In the morning, happy in the opinion of seeing you
 blessed with a virtuous partner ; and while he was fe-
 licitating himself on your success, to be suddenly sur-
 prised with the disastrous spectacle of a bleeding son !
 My own honoured parent's case is truly deplorable ;
 she will suffer under the heavy load of blame and ac-
 cusation ; and although there be no evidence to im-
 peach her innocence, such is the watchful jealousy of
 my

my father's disposition, that he will fabricate a thousand schemes but he will involve her in this supposed criminality.

How are the best of intentions, frequently by the intervention of a single incident, blasted and rendered abortive ! My mother, from a well-grounded consciousness of my sister's unalterable attachment, and the visible decline of her health, wished to preserve her child, by giving her consent to an union which alone could reward the one and restore the other. Amiable resolution ! but how art thou perverted by some secret and unforeseen contingency ! Is not this an instructive lesson, and demonstrative of the futility of all our conclusions ! You were confident of the certainty of your success ; in a few minutes your machinations were defeated, your life in imminent danger, and though the prize of your adventure was offered to your arms, you had not the capability to receive her. So narrow is the path of rectitude, and so short-sighted is the son of frail mortality !

My own narrative, you will recollect, was discontinued after Olivia's and my departure from Mr. Brooke's with an intention of taking a walk in the park. It was almost noon, and the sun was scorching : we took shelter from his meridian rays beneath the cooling shade of a row of very tall pines. The solitude and sequestered situation of the place were peculiarly favourable to the soft impulses of the tender passion.—I wished to embrace the present moment, and, prompted by the whispering dictates of my beating heart, took her by the hand, and said, “ In-
“ deed, Olivia, since I had the happiness to declare
“ my passion, and be permitted to tender you my ad-
“ dresses, I have experienced more real pleasure
“ than I have enjoyed for some months before ; but
“ may.

" may I presume to hope, that you will confirm this
" pleasure by an assurance that you do not receive
" me with coolness or indifference ?"

" IF such an assurance," answered Olivia, " were
" sufficient to establish your present happiness, pro-
" bably I might not find much difficulty to give it;
" but I am young and inexperienced, almost a
" stranger to the bias of my own inclination and the
" dictates of my heart; therefore, I must hesitate be-
" fore I come to such a decision, lest I should be
" precipitated into an egregious error."

" I APPLAUD your prudence; yet why so cau-
" tious? Though our intimacy be of no long dura-
" tion, yet confide in my honourable declaration
" when I protest to you, that I love you—yes, love
" you with the tenderest, the most refined passion that
" can agitate the mind of an unhappy youth—un-
" happy beyond expression, if not alleviated by your
" kindness, and informed of his fate :—if rejected,
" the most miserable wretch that wanders upon the
" face of the earth: if accepted, I should deem
" myself infinitely beyond the reach of Fortune's
" arrows."

" OH ! Mr. Wilton, you are far too sanguine.
" There are few conditions in life either so wretched
" or so happy, but the former has some intervals of
" mitigation, and the latter some hours of sorrow.
" Your fate, I hope, as to happiness or misery, is
" not so minutely interwoven with my determination.
" as to be solely dependent upon it."

" SOLELY dependent upon it indeed, my lovely
" Olivia ! Do not temporize with me—every mi-
" nute adds to my suspense, and consequently to my
" misery."

" misery. Is it not cruel, Olivia, to be treated
 " with indifference by the dear object of all my
 " wishes ?"

" If such a confirmation, Sir, will relieve your
 " suspense, you are conscious I never received you
 " with indifference, much less have treated you with
 " cruelty.—No, Mr. Wilton, my partiality, if not
 " manifestly acknowledged, was at least tacitly ad-
 " mitted."

" HAPPY moment !" exclaimed I, " which has
 " dissipated my suspense, and informed me that I am
 " not indifferent to my Olivia !" —Clasping her in
 my arms, in the ardour of my transports I dared
 to impress a kiss upon her lips :---she coloured, and
 the soft suffusion which overspread her face, made
 her beauty more beautiful.

AFTER a temporary pause, and having somewhat
 recovered from her confusion, she said, " Mr. Wil-
 " ton, I wish not to deceive you---the openness of
 " your behaviour should not be returned by the least
 " semblance of duplicity."---She paused again, and
 seemed much distressed.

" PROCEED, my angel, and doubt not my con-
 " fidence."

" You may possibly be deceived in relation to
 " my family---I am not the daughter of Sir Robert
 " Bertram."

SHE sighed, and the tears stole down her lovely
 cheeks.—I kissed them away.

" I HAD, Mr. Wilton, a father-- one of the best
 " of fathers---one whom I never offended--from
 " whose

“ whose paternal care I expected every indulgence ;
“ and though I have long experienced all the love
“ and affection of the tenderest parents in the good
“ Sir Robert Bertram and his worthy Lady, yet be-
“ lieve me when I assure you that I am a child of
many sorrows.”----Here her grief stopped her utterance, she laid her head upon my bosom, and wet it with her tears.

I WAS anxious to hear a further explanation, but so immoderate was her grief, that it would have been an act of cruelty to afflict her more at present by the painful recollection of scenes, the bare mention of which overwhelmed her in a flood of tears.

I LED her to a seat which was placed at the distance of a few yards from us ; and being seated, I tenderly requested her to moderate her grief, saying, “ My dear Olivia, if you have lost a father, I will
“ be a father and a husband to you: you shall pour
“ your sorrows into my bosom, and it shall be my
“ daily study to mitigate and bear an equal share of
“ them.”

SHE answered me with sighs. I held her enfolded in my arms---her head was reclined upon my breast---my eyes were riveted upon her face, attentive to every motion. I thought I heard a foot---I looked up---Mr. Fennell was within a few yards of us, walking with a very hasty step.

OLIVIA saw him not until she was awakened from her momentary trance by the rudeness of his address.

“ I PERCEIVE,” said he with a tone of arrogance,
“ all your walks are solitary. It is not very polite
“ thus

“ thus abruptly to disturb your silence, but probably
 “ hereafter the Lady may thank me.”

SHE arose, and, smiling contempt at the littleness of his sarcasm, replied, “ If hereafter I should
 “ thank you, it should be for a discontinuance of that
 “ officiousness, which has not hitherto merited my
 “ thanks.”

HE affected not to hear her, but, turning and addressing himself to me, said, “ Your perseverance in a
 “ pursuit where I claim a prior right, is an insult
 “ which I am determined not to brook.”

I ANSWERED, “ Mr. Fennell, this point was discussed before to-day, and whatever prior right
 “ you may claim to this lady (taking her by the
 “ hand), I am apt to believe it is ill founded. She
 “ denies your right, and her denial ought to be your
 “ law ; and therefore know that I claim a right,
 “ though a slight one, which I will not relinquish
 “ but by the express and positive commands of the
 “ lady herself.”

“ You a right !” exclaimed he, with fury flashing from his eyes---his countenance distorted---and his whole frame trembling with the agitations of rage---“ You a right ! This is too insolent, Olivia :
 “ such a declaration is disparaging to your honour.”

“ No, Sir,” answered Olivia, “ but such a behaviour as your’s is disgraceful to good-manners.”

HE answered not. I deemed his arrogance not worthy of rebuke, and we walked silently back to Bertram-Hall.

LETTER XXXVIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

I ONLY continued at Bertram-Hall about half an hour; for Olivia soon after our arrival retired, and the sullen reserve of Mr. Fennell threw such a disgusting silence over all the parties present, that I found it more pleasant to retire, in the happy contemplation which the knowledge of my having gained some share of the affection of my lovely Olivia afforded me. It is not long ago since this consideration alone would have made me completely happy; but such is the changeable lot of humanity, that we always have some gnawing ingredient in our sublunary enjoyments to embitter our pleasures, and teach us to place no reliance on such transitory objects. Thus, though I conceive myself happy in the affections of my Olivia, still the recollection of my alienation from my family at Wilton-Park, the unhappiness and misery which my precipitate departure hath occasioned, and moreover the supposition of having incurred my father's dreadful imprecation, with this unfortunate adventure of your's, form a hideous combination, which almost destroys every moment of my present peace, and racks me with perpetual inquietudes.

THIS morning I was waited on by a gentleman whom I had never seen before. As soon as he was introduced, and requested to be seated, he politely said, "Sir, you will probably be surprised at the visit of an utter stranger; but as I come at the particular

“ ticular desire of my friend Mr. Fennell, I hope
“ you will excuse me, though I be necessitated to
“ deliver an unwelcome message.”

I REPLIED, “ Your politeness, Sir, needs no
“ apology, and whatever message you are deputed to
“ deliver to me from your friend Mr. Fennell, I am
“ ready to receive.”

He answered, “ Mr. Fennell is informed that you
“ are become a candidate for the affections of Miss
“ Bertram, to whom he lays a claim in priority of
“ intention ; but he wishes to be satisfied from your
“ own declaration, whether his information be true
“ or false, as upon that alone he means to regulate
“ his future conduct towards you.”

“ SIR, I deem Mr. Fennell’s conduct in this af-
“ fair very indelicate and extraordinary. He cer-
“ tainly has no right whatever to put any such inter-
“ rogatories to me ; and whilst my behaviour to
“ Mr. Fennell is regulated by propriety and polite-
“ ness, I do not conceive myself in the least respon-
“ sible to him for any of my actions. As to his al-
“ legation of a priority of claim, it is so futile
“ and unauthorised, that it deserves no serious
“ consideration. I thought it my duty to ap-
“ ply to Sir Robert Bertram, and not to Mr. Fen-
“ nell, for information, and Sir Robert immediately
“ informed me, that Olivia had no previous engage-
“ ment. This information has been since confirmed
“ by the lady herself ; and, thus circumstanced, I
“ am certainly not amenable to any other individual
“ whatever.”

“ SIR,” returned the stranger, “ your explica-
“ tion is honourable and ingenuous ; but as I am not
“ commissioned to decide from my own opinion, I
“ hope

“ hope you will be express and determinate in your
“ answer to my first question, Whether or no you
“ have paid your addresses to Miss Bertram ?”

“ It is certainly altogether optional in me, Sir,
“ whether or no I answer this question directly. For
“ Mr. Fennell to assume any authority over my ac-
“ tions, is neither warrantable by the practice of ci-
“ vility nor the laws of justice. I have patiently
“ borne the coarseness of his insults, and overlooked
“ the sneers of his petulance ; but why I am to be
“ accountable to him for the minutest action of my
“ life, I am totally at a loss to conceive,”

“ Sir,” replied the stranger, “ your conception of
“ the propriety of your own conduct may be just and
“ rational ; yet as Mr. Fennell views it in a different
“ light, and concludes himself to be materially in-
“ jured, I hope you can have no objection to give
“ a direct answer to the question proposed, as an
“ evasive one may be construed into duplicity.”

“ No, Sir, I neither wish to evade your ques-
“ tion, nor be charged with duplicity ; I only wish
“ to know, what right Mr. Fennell has to cavil at
“ any of my procedures ?”

“ He pleads, Sir, that his first proposal ought to
“ have been rejected, before you had any right to
“ interpose.”

“ I AM a perfect stranger, Sir, to this mercantile
“ kind of dealing. I have informed you already, that
“ Sir Robert Bertram and the lady herself assured me,
“ there was no matrimonial connection upon the tapis
“ between Olivia and Mr. Fennell. This assurance
“ I deemed altogether satisfactory, without appeal-
“ ing to Mr. Fennell for his approbation ; but as
“ you

“ you particularly request my avowal or disavowal,
 “ I aver to you, that I have paid my addressee to
 “ Miss Bertram, and mean to persevere, whilst the
 “ Lady deigns to honour me with her attention.”

“ THIS avowal, Sir, you will not retract?”

“ Not in the least, Sir.”

“ ARE you disposed to discontinue your addresses
 “ until Mr. Fennell receives a final rejection?”

“ FROM the honourable assurance I have had,
 “ Sir, and under the impression, that Mr. Fennell’s
 “ proposals were never accepted; I am determined
 “ to persevere without any retraction.”

“ I AM sorry, Sir, for your resolution, since it
 “ reduces me to the disagreeable necessity of deliver-
 “ ing to you the final requisition of my friend. The
 “ contents of this letter will convince you of his
 “ ultimate determination. The time and place I
 “ have full power to settle with you.”

IN pronouncing these words he gave me the follow-
 ing letter:

TO MR. WILTON.

SIR,

ALTHOUGH you were sufficiently apprized of
 my attachment to Miss Bertram, you have inter-
 posed with a view to frustrate my intentions, and
 disappoint me in my well-grounded hopes of success;
 and as I am determined not to relinquish my pursuit,
 nor tacitly submit to your insulting interference, I in-
 sist upon the satisfaction of a gentleman. Mr. Col-

ton, who does me the honour to deliver this to you, will settle every particular relative to the business. Your determination of time and place will be accepted, and whatever resolutions may be agreed upon between Mr. Colton and you will be punctually adhered to. I shall wait with the utmost patience for your ultimate decision ; which will be the more agreeable the sooner it is intimated to

J. FENNELL.

So, Mr. Colton, I perceive your friend has
“ given you an ample commission in this very ho-
“ nourable business ? which I have always conceived
“ to be disgraceful to humanity.”

“ You must acknowledge, Mr. Wilton, that it is
“ the only appeal to which a gentleman can have re-
“ course ”

“ Not at all, Sir; the acknowledgement would
“ be irrational and injudicious. The supposition of
“ an offence, or even the actual commission of an
“ offence, might certainly be terminated much more
“ amicably than having recourse to that infernal me-
“ thod by which the existence of a fellow-creature
“ may be destroyed.”

“ Custom, Mr. Wilton, is an all-powerful agent ;
“ and to whatever mode she has given her sanction
“ it behoves us to give our acquiescence, lest we
“ should be stigmatized with the opprobrium of sin-
“ gularity.”

“ The implicit admission of your maxim, Mr. Col-
“ ton, would overturn every establishment of reli-
“ gion and morality, and equally militate against
“ every laudable institution which may have been
“ erected

“erected upon the ruin of some exploded custom.
 “Whatever is evil, although sanctioned by the re-
 “vered appellation of custom, cannot be too soon
 “exploded.”

“As you and I, Mr. Wilton, totally disagree in
 “our opinions on this point, and as the present bu-
 “siness is not likely to be terminated by any of our
 “casuistical distinctions, may I beg to know your
 “determination upon the subject, and when and
 “where you wish to terminate the dispute?”

“Mr. Colton, I am not so precipitate as to come
 “to an immediate conclusion on so important an af-
 “fair, where my life and character are concerned;
 “but you may rest assured, that I will not shrink
 “from the defence of my avowal, nor crouch be-
 “neath the odious epithet of coward. In a few
 “days Mr. Fennell may expect my final determi-
 “nation.”

Mr. Colton politely apologized for the trouble he had given me, and, as he retired, reminded me of punctuality, as Mr. Fennell's impatience would not brook delay.

I TOLD him, that Mr. Fennell's impatience must wait for my consideration. He bowed and departed.

No sooner was he gone, and the door shut, than I reflected upon this extraordinary politeness of a man who was able to settle a deliberate scheme of murder with as much coolness and precision as though he had been settling the etiquette of a ball or a masquerade.

To me death has always appeared to be a very serious subject, and deserving of the maturest con-

sideration ; but Mr. Colton could adjust the preliminaries of a duel, in the event of which the destruction of his friend might probably be involved, with as much unconcern and sedateness as if he were only a distant spectator, or an inattentive hearer. Strange infatuation ! that a man who dignifies another by the hallowed name of Friend, should be deliberately instrumental in forging the means to destroy his existence ; or active to become an accessory, when he wished to imbrue his hands in the blood of a fellow-creature, merely to gratify the violence of an ill-governed passion.

SERIOUSLY debating with myself on the measure it would be proper for me to take in this important crisis, I frequently, Benfield, wished for your presence, as your counsel might have determined my conduct in this critical conjuncture. You foresaw the event, and proffered your assistance ; but an evil destiny has ultimately prevented me from soliciting and you from complying with my wishes.

To shrink from this challenge, and be branded with the opprobrious appellation of Coward, is what my native pride recoils at ; yet the opinion I have formed of right and wrong, of religion, virtue, and true honour, strongly militates against my acceptance of his challenge. My mind is at present too much perturbed to come to any final conclusion, further than that I am resolved to acquaint Sir Robert and the worthy Mr. Brooke with the business, whose friendly counsels may prove of signal use, either to extricate me from the rashness of this adventure, or confirm my resolution to rush further into it. O Benfield ! I feel I want your assistance : why are you at this time incapable of affording it ?

LETTER XXXIX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

SOON after I had dined I went to Bertram-Hall, with the intention of consulting Sir Robert, whom I found very cheerfully engaged in a friendly conversation with his Lady and Olivia.

As soon as I entered, Lady Bertram said, "I am glad, Mr. Wilton, you are come; for we are scarcely recovered from a fit of the vapours, which the sullenness of Mr. Fennell occasioned amongst us last night. It was fortunate he retired so early; for his gloominess and reserve have of late become intolerable. I heartily wish he were perched upon the highest peak of Cheviot-hills, where the thin chill atmosphere would probably evaporate all his phlegmatic surly humours. What say you, Olivia? will you give your consent to have him placed so high?"

"It is immaterial to me, Madam, how high he be placed, if he be only at a sufficient distance from me; and in no very imminent danger."

"So, so, Olivia, with all your squeamishness, you would not have him placed in a dangerous situation! I thought that any person, whom we viewed with an eye of cool indifference, might be placed in the most hazardous situation, without exciting a single sigh for his preservation."

"PARDON me, Lady Bertram, I could not see

" my enemy in impending danger, without apprizing him of it. This is a duty we owe to every being of the human species."

" COME, come, Olivia, I believe you will fall in love with Mr. Fennell after all, and then Mr. Wilton will inevitably suffer an irreparable loss. Pray, Sir Robert, what is this you are poring over with a face as grave as an owl?"

HERE she snatched Mr. Fennell's letter out of his hands, which I had given him to peruse during the preceding conversation.—" Merciful heaven! what is this, Mr. Wilton? A challenge, and from Mr. Fennell! Pretty work, Olivia! Here Mr. Fennell wishes to blow Mr. Wilton's brains out, because you are so obstinate as not to marry him against your inclination!"

AT the first part of this exclamation Olivia looked surprized; but no sooner did she hear the word *challenge* pronounced than she turned pale as death—her eyes gradually closed:—she held a newspaper in her hand—it dropped---I sprang to her chair, and caught the lovely creature as she was falling into a swoon upon the floor.

" WHAT indiscretion!" said Sir Robert.

" INDEED, I was not aware of the consequences, Sir Robert, otherwise I should not have acted so."

" APPLY your salts, my dear, apologize for your rashness, and deny every syllable as a piece of harmless merriment."

" I AM

" I AM all obedience, Sir Robert. She recovers !
 " Mr. Wilton, conceal that tremendous letter. My
 " dear Olivia, why are you so terrified at a little
 " harmless mirth ?"

" I AM not well, Madam ; I beg leave to retire."

LADY Bertram led her out, pale, faint, and trembling.

I THEN observed to Sir Robert, that " I was
 " sorry for my own indiscretion in producing the letter ;
 " but as I had not the least intention of discovering its contents to the ladies, so I thought there
 " was no hazard of their enquiry. The discovery
 " has alarmed Olivia."

" YES, Mr. Wilton, an alarm which will probably give you pleasure, as it has betrayed the tender sensations of a heart too susceptible of every delicate feeling."

" I SHALL certainly, Sir Robert, deem myself
 " happy in the envied partiality of my dear Olivia ;
 " but you perceive by what a service I am to merit
 " her."

" PRAY, Mr. Wilton, when did you receive
 " this letter ?"

" THIS morning, Sir."

" IT is no more than I expected ; but what answer did you return ?"

" I RETURNED a verbal answer by Mr. Colton,
 " that in the space of a few days Mr. Fennell should
 " hear of my determination."

"WHAT is your determination, Mr. Wilton?"

"To accept his challenge, Sir Robert."

"I SEE no alternative, Mr. Wilton, since you are called upon as a gentleman, and a man of honour. To decline the meeting would give him a specious cause for exultation and triumph, and render your character liable to the ignominious reproach of cowardice; a stigma not to be endured in the present day, when all honour is supposed to be suspended upon the cock of a pistol, or the point of a sword. Though I severely condemn the brutality of the practice, and could wish to see it eternally exploded, yet that sovereign tyrant CUSTOM has stamped it with an irreversibile sanction; so that a single individual has nothing more to do than to comply with the present emergency. And pray, when do you mean to acquaint Mr. Fennell with your purpose?"

"THIS evening, Sir, and meet him to-morrow."

"MR. Wilton, though young, you have not been too precipitate. I commend your caution. The barbarity of the action may be thought a sufficient excuse for non-compliance; yet, when an honourable character is to be supported in the world unspotted and unimpeached, we must, though unwilling, coincide with that mode which is the most prevalent, though not the most laudable."

I REPLIED, "As my determination is fixed, Sir Robert, can you supply me with those instruments of death which are requisite upon this occasion?"

"My

"My pistols, Mr. Wilton, are in good order—
"my sword has not been drawn for some years---
"we will immediately examine it."

WE walked into the study---the pistols were produced, and deemed fit for present use. The sword was drawn---it glittered in the rays of the sun, and seemed very well calculated for the dismal work of death. After a cursory examination, I placed them upon the table, saying, "Whatever destiny awaits
"my use of you, ye innocent instruments, I mean to
"put it to the trial---the prize is worth the struggle
"---and if I fall, I shall not live to lament my loss."

"BUT, Mr. Wilton, there is one very material
"article still wanting."

"WHAT is that, Sir Robert?"

"A SECOND, Sir."

"I MUST endeavour to stand alone, Sir Robert,
"as there is not a gentleman in the North whom I
"have the least acquaintance with except yourself
"and Mr. Brooke, neither of whom I can with
"propriety solicit to undertake so disagreeable an
"office."

"WHY am I, Mr. Wilton, deemed unworthy of
"the office?"

"YOU misconceive me, Sir Robert. From your
"long acquaintance with Mr. Fennell, and the near
"relation you bear to Olivia, I deemed it improper
"to solicit the favour of your attendance."

"THERE is no impropriety in it, Mr. Wilton, and I voluntarily offer to accompany you."

"You confer an obligation on me, which, if I live, I shall live to acknowledge. Can those instruments of destruction be secretly conveyed to my lodgings this evening?"

"LEAVE that to my care."

"I NEED not, Sir Robert, caution you to secrecy. ---Dear Olivia! I have probably seen thee for the last time!"

I LEFT Sir Robert and went to the Vicarage, to enquire after the health of my pretty cowslip-gatherer. I was happy to find the little cherub so much relieved from the baleful influence of the fever, as to be able to sit up and play with his elder brother. I congratulated Mr. Brooke upon his speedy recovery, who seemed to express his joy on the fortunate event by a cheerful and constant attendance on the wants of the little invalid. I took him in my arms, kissed him, and asked him if he would take a walk into the fields along with me. He answered, "Yes," whilst a placid smile gleamed upon his pale and languid countenance. He cast his arms around my neck, saying, "Come, go, go." I perceived I had acted wrong by instilling such an idea, when it was improper to indulge him in the innocent simplicity of his wish. I therefore framed an excuse, but he seemed discontented, held out his little arms to his father, and left me in disgust.

I OBSERVED to Mr. Brooke, that it was certainly a folly in parents or guardians of children to feed their eager fancies with promises which are not even intended

intended to be performed. This single instance was demonstrative how eagerly the infant mind embraces the idea of pleasure resulting from a careless promise, which, when not fulfilled according to expectation, that innocent confidence is destroyed on which a mind unaccustomed to the deceits of life places its sole reliance. Another similar promise is not depended on; hence diffidence and distrust arise, and the child is taught by methods in which he perceives his parents to indulge themselves, slowly but methodically, the baleful art of falsifying.

“YOUR observations, Mr. Wilton, are just and pertinent. Experience has taught me, that we ought never to promise even the most trivial gratification to the infant mind, without an actual performance. Children, much sooner than many people imagine, begin to reflect, compare, and conclude; and when they find themselves deceived by a parent, whom he is taught to reverence and esteem, he readily concludes, there can be no harm in a practice which his parent has inculcated. Hence, I believe, originates that shameful custom of lying so frequent among children; they are taught it very early, whilst a natural bias and evil propensity are concluded to be the primitive sources. We stigmatize nature for a crime which our own folly instils and supports.”

PLEASED with the spirit of this agreeable conversation, I had almost forgot the dreadful business which I had promised to determine in the evening. I left the Vicarage therefore with precipitation, and retired to my chamber. Having written the following answer to Mr. Fennell, and being somewhat composed after I had dispatched it, I wrote, in case of an unfortunate event, an affectionate apology to my father,

ther, another to my honoured mother, a letter to each of my sisters, and one to you, not to be delivered until the heart which dictated and the pulse of the hand which wrote them had ceased to beat. Lastly, I wrote to my beloved Olivia. As I was concluding this last, a parcel was brought to me from Sir Robert Bertram, wrapped up very carefully. I laid the destructive engines on my table, and calmly smiled at the folly of mankind, who could use them as the final arbitrators of the ~~most~~ trifling dispute. I was in a disposition to moralize, but cared not to indulge myself on so melancholy a subject, and therefore prepared to go to rest. Probably before you receive this the hand which wrote it will be cold and motionless.

TO JOHN FENNELL, ESQ.

S I R,

I SUPPOSE Mr. Colton has informed you of the positive avowal I made to him of my affection for Miss Bertram. You call upon me for another decision than the Lady's will. I hope you will meet me to-morrow evening precisely at six o'clock, at the west side of Bertram Park, where our difference may be finally determined. Sir Robert Bertram will accompany me. Sir Robert and your friend shall adjust every necessary preliminary, that, at the appointed hour, no disagreement may prevent our important purpose,

I am, Sir,

H. WILTON.

LETTER XL.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

WHILST I was preparing to go to rest, I was alarmed by a loud knocking at the front door. In a few minutes my hostess came, and informed me that Mr. Brooke wished to speak with me. I desired he might walk in.

As soon as he entered, he said, "Mr. Wilton, you are, doubtless, surprised at the lateness of my visit; but let the merit of my intention plead my apology;—here is a letter for you."

I LOOKED at the direction—I knew the writing—I tenderly kissed it, yet trembled to read the contents. "Accept, Mr. Brooke, my kindest thanks for the trouble I have given you at this late hour."

"I HOPE, Mr. Wilton, you do not despise this favour of the Lady?"

"PARDON me, Mr. Brooke, a favour from her fair hand is the most agreeable present which I can receive."—I broke it open, and read the following tender effusion, which has almost distracted me.

TO MR. WILTON.

DEAR SIR,

CONFUSED, and absolutely uncertain how to determine, since Sir Robert and Lady Bertram positively assert that the mention of the challenge was
nothing

nothing more than the effect of mirth; yet I have my fears, strong boding fears, that it is but too true. The mystery in which they have enveloped this offensive letter, and their evasive answers to my enquiries on the subject, confirm my suspicions. I know the man, and believe I am not mistaken in my opinion of his character. O Wilton, if there be any veracity in your vows, any truth in the assertions of your love, I solemnly conjure you not to deceive me, nor risk a life which I already value above the universe. Remember you live not for yourself—remember I love—Goodness! what distraction confounds—what dizziness is this!--O Wilton! Wilton! forbear, and let the arguments of the good Mr. Brooke prevail with you to desist from your fatal purpose.

I am, &c.

OLIVIA BERTRAM.

THUNDERSTRUCK at the perusal of this letter, I arose involuntarily in great disorder and agitation from my chair, and walked across the floor. Mr. Brooke commiserated my situation, and strove, by lenient and gentle admonitions, to assuage the convulsive throbbings of my perturbed bosom. Clasping the letter at intervals to my breast, I exclaimed, "Oh Olivia! dost thou love me? Yes, I trust to thy confession! I will live to repay thy generous affection!"

How long this agreeable reverie continued, I am uncertain. The voice of Mr. Brooke suddenly recalled my disordered thoughts to the purport of his nocturnal visit, by saying, "Mr. Wilton, I am no stranger to the unhappy difference that subsists between you and Mr. Fennell, nor to the mode, by which it is intended to be terminated."

I STARTED

I STARTED at the discovery, and answered,
“ Pray, Sir, whose officiousness has misled you ? ”

“ No equivocation, Mr. Wilton. I came hither
“ in doubt, at the particular request of the amiable
“ young lady whose fears for your safety have forced
“ from her, I perceive, a declaration of her affection;
“ but your own conduct now convinces me of the
“ truth of her assertion. Why do you look so
“ wildly, Mr. Wilton ? It was Olivia who told me
“ that you had received a challenge from Mr. Fennell, and that she has reason to believe you intended to accept of it.”

“ MR. Brooke, I do not wish to conceal any of
“ my proceedings from you, and therefore candidly
“ acknowledge to you that I have accepted of this
“ challenge, although I sincerely condemn and abhor the practice of duelling, as subversive of morality, and contradictory to the laws of religion.”

“ PRAY, Mr. Wilton, how then do you reconcile
“ your practice with your principles ? ”

“ Oh, Mr. Brooke, do not ask me to reconcile such
“ jarring ingredients : I condemn my conduct ; and
“ yet I flatter myself that you will approve of the
“ principles upon which I have acted. But tell my
“ dear Olivia, tell the charming maid, that the last
“ words you heard me utter, were, that her lovely
“ image was imprinted indelibly on my heart.”

“ THOSE, Sir, shall not be your last words to me.
“ Pardon the freedom of one who wishes to dissuade
“ you from the commission of a crime which, if it
“ should not prove fatal to your life, will embitter
“ your days even to the latest period of your
“ existence ;

“ existence ; and if in the dreadful event you should
 “ prove unfortunate, are you prepared to rush thus
 “ precipitately into the awful presence of your Crea-
 “ tor, and meet the eye of your offended GOD ?
 “ What excuse can you make before the high tribu-
 “ nal of heavenly justice, where TRUTH cannot, by
 “ any equivocation, be perverted or concealed ? The
 “ poor plea of fancied custom will not lessen your
 “ guilt ; for you are conscious it is wrong ; and Re-
 “ ligion, whose sacred precepts you acknowledge
 “ this barbarous practice violates, instead of becom-
 “ ing the advocate of mercy, will lift up her voice
 “ against you. The principles you have expressed
 “ are right, and yet you venture daringly to com-
 “ mit that which you are satisfied is wrong.”

“ OH MR. Brooke, do not judge me so severely !
 “ I assent implicitly to all your assertions, as per-
 “ fectly consonant to the conviction and feelings of
 “ my own mind ; but what can I do in this pressing
 “ exigency ?”

“ RETRACT, if you have accepted the challenge,
 “ and refuse to meet Mr. Fennell. This is no dis-
 “ paragement to your courage. The bravest men
 “ have ever despised the barbarous practice ; yet,
 “ when their King and Country called for their exer-
 “ tions, they have steadily and calmly looked death
 “ in the face, and have advanced even to the dreadful
 “ cannon’s mouth to meet it. Think of such ex-
 “ amples ; they are not few. Think what you owe
 “ to your God, to your Country, to your Parents,
 “ to Yourself ; and withal think what you owe to
 “ the Fair Writer of that letter !”

“ EVERY thing, Mr. Brooke ! and I am willing
 “ to lay my life at her feet, if such a sacrifice would
 “ add one moment to her happiness.

“ REMEMBER,

"REMEMBER, Mr. Wilton, she is at this minute miserable and unhappy."

"OH, Sir, wring not my soul with so dreadful an assertion!"

"IT is true, Sir; and let that consideration, if no other will, prevail upon you to relinquish an intention so destructive to her peace and happiness."

"OH Mr. Brooke! you have touched upon a subject which quite unmans me, and melts my soul into tenderness. I will reflect—I will reconsider, I must acknowledge the criminality of my purpose—I will retract."

"HOLD to that resolution, Mr. Wilton, and be not ashamed of being a rigid advocate in the cause of virtue."

It was late, and Mr. Brooke, by a variety of potent arguments, drawn from religion and sound policy, attempted to confirm me in my last resolution. They were congenial to my own opinions, consentaneous to the purest precepts of virtue, and accordant to the wise decrees of political safety; I never therefore attempted to combat their justice or propriety. Mr. Brooke retired, wishing to see me in the morning.

I WAS calm and composed before his arrival; but his salutary admonitions had unhinged my resolution, disturbed my thoughts, and thrown my mind into a very painful confusion. I wanted repose, and wished to sleep:—my wish, alas! was vain—The softness of repose fled from the turbulence of my distracted mind;—sleep refused to close my wearied eyes, and I passed

fed the night in surrounding horrors. Oh, Mr. Brooke, your kindness hath undone me ! yet I thank you ; for friendship and virtue were your motive ! But shall I comply with his request ? The world's dread laugh answers, No. The kind forgiveness of my father, the distraction of my poor mother, and affectionate sorrows of my sisters, were ever present to my imagination. But the dearest object that wrung my afflicted heart was the lovely Olivia. Heavens, what a night I spent ! Oh, Mr. Brooke, I forgive and acknowledge the virtuous anxiety, the tender care, the parental kindness, which induced your visit. You endeavoured to persuade me to what I acknowledge is right---I approve your opinions ; but must, yes I fear I must, act contrary to them.

THE rays of the sun shone brightly through the crevices of the window-shutters, and penetrated the curtains of my bed. The industrious family had left their peaceful beds, and were already stirring in the business of the day, when a heavy slumber overspread me, and I tasted the blessings of a sound repose.

I AWAKED calm and refreshed, and was surprized, on looking at my watch, to see that it was past one o'clock. When breakfast was brought in, I was informed that Mr. Brooke had been enquiring for me ; but being told that I was not risen, he would not disturb me, and said he would call again. Worthy man, how shall I repay your kindness !

WHILST I was musing over a cup of chocolate, Sir Robert entered. He said, " Mr. Wilton, my Lady is very urgent and clamorous with me to dissuade you from this rencounter. She does not know that you have accepted the challenge, nor must she know it. What hour and place have you appointed ? "

" Six

“ SIX o’clock this evening, Sir, and we are to meet at the west side of your park.”

“ VERY well; at four I will, to prevent suspicion, ride out a different way, and, under some pretence, will dismiss the servant. I will meet you there a little before six; I must not stay any longer here, lest the ladies should suspect where I am.”

HAVING finished my breakfast, and adjusted every thing for the fatal meeting, I walked by the side of the Wansbeck, and sitting down upon its verdant bank, beneath the cooling shade of a poplar, I amused myself with the perusal of *Lucretius*. The arguments he uses against the fears of death were far from convincing; they appeared to me at that awful hour both trivial and inconclusive; the Divinity that stirred within my breast every moment confuted his reasonings. They produced, however, one good effect; for though I did not feel their force to the full extent, yet they considerably relieved me from that tenderness which Olivia’s letter had infused. I should scarcely have felt a single pang, but for that poisonous letter!— I looked at my watch; and finding that it was near five o’clock, I walked hastily to my lodging, where I was informed that Mr. Brooke, after waiting above an hour, had not been gone many minutes.

I PUT the pistols into my pocket, and, concealing my sword under my coat, walked towards the place of appointment. Upon my arrival, no person was there, and I walked backward and forward till a few minutes before six, when Sir Robert Bertram arrived. He alighted from his horse, and walked with me. The appointed hour passed, and Mr. Fennell never appeared! but as there might be some difference

ence in regard to time, we agreed to wait half an hour longer. At twenty minutes past six by my watch Mr. Fennell came, accompanied by Mr. Colton. They alighted, and, after the example of Sir Robert, tied their horses to the neighbouring trees.

OUR salute was distant, cool, and reserved. Sir Robert and Mr. Colton settled the distance, and immediately paced it. During the adjustment of these preliminaries, I found myself more collected than I had been since the receipt of Olivia's letter. These preliminaries being adjusted, we took our ground. Mr. Fennell received his pistols from Mr. Colton, as I did mine from Sir Robert. Mr. Fennell had the first fire. I assure you, Benfield, that when I saw his pistol presented, I had occasion to summon all my fortitude. He fired, but without effect. I returned the fire, and missed likewise.

SIR Robert interposed, and signified his wishes that the business might now be settled amicably; but Mr. Fennell peremptorily refused to listen to any terms of accommodation, and immediately presented his second pistol.

I FELT the ball graze upon my left arm a little below the elbow. I discharged my second pistol in the air, and drawing my sword, desired him to advance. He came forward with much intrepidity, and attacked me with great fury and impetuosity. I only acted upon the defensive for several minutes, but such was the violence of my antagonist, that it required my utmost address and exertion to parry the many skilful lounches he made at me. Abating of his vigour, I became the assailant, when, aiming a skilful thrust, my foot slipped, and before I could recover myself, I perceived the point of his sword below my

my right breast. I felt I was wounded, and was fearful of the consequence. Irritated by this mischance, I became more furious, and, of course, less guarded; and had not my opponent exhausted his strength at the first onset, I certainly must have fallen beneath the vigour of his arm. After a few ineffectual thrusts however, which he parried with dexterity, I wounded him in the right arm, my sword passing through above the elbow. Mr. Colton observed it, and immediately interposed, desiring that he would desist. "No, no, Mr. Colton," answered Mr. Fennell, "it is nothing but a mere scratch." He then attacked me with more fury than skill, and I found little difficulty in defending myself from his violence. His life I now perceived was in my power, but I had no wish to deprive him of it. Retreating a little backward, I rested the point of my sword upon the grass, and said, "Mr. Fennell, you must be conscious of the superiority which the wound in your arm hath given me; I hope therefore we may terminate our difference without proceeding to extremity."

"I SCORN, Mr. Wilton, to acknowledge your superiority; it is visible only to yourself."

SIR Robert again interposed, and anxiously endeavoured to bring about an accommodation, but Mr. Fennell remained inflexible. I therefore assumed my guard, and received the attack of my opponent, who had now lost all his temper, and, of course, his skill. He made a violent lunge, which I parried; and immediately passing my sword through his left side, he fell.

CLAPPING both his hands to the fatal wound, "Wilton," exclaimed he, "the prize is yours!" then, writhing with agony, he added, "Fly, lest

"the laws of your country overtake you ; for, living or dying, you shall not escape my vengeance."

"I GRIEVE for your implacability, Mr. Fennell. If in defending my honour and my life, I have deprived you of your's, I shall trust to the justice of my country for an acquittal. Mr. Colton, have you any assistance?"

"THERE is a surgeon waiting at a little distance with a carriage."

MR. Colton untied his horse, and rode off full speed.

I FELT a sudden faintness overspread my limbs, and sat down upon the grass, while Sir Robert was attentively administering consolation to Mr. Fennell, who appeared to experience the most excruciating torments from the wound I had given him.

THE carriage in a short time appeared, and the surgeon carefully examined Mr. Fennell's wound ; which, on Sir Robert's wishing to know the nature of it, he pronounced to be dangerous. My antagonist was accordingly removed into the carriage ; and being supported between Mr. Colton and the surgeon, they gently drove away. As soon as they were gone, I attempted to rise, but I found myself quite disabled ; my arm was stiff, the wound in my breast painful in the extreme ; and I found myself faint through loss of blood. By the assistance however of Sir Robert I arose, and having, with much difficulty, mounted his horse, I proceeded towards my lodgings, while Sir Robert walked attentively by my side all the way. As soon as we arrived, Mr. Brooke came out, and by the assistance of the gentlemen I alighted, and was led up to my room.

"ALAS !

“ ALAS! Mr. Wilton,” said the good man, “ your pale wan looks, and this blood upon your clothes, confirm me in the dreadful work you have been acting. I thought, when I parted with you last night, you had altered your resolution.”

“ MR. Brooke,” interrupted Sir Robert, “ let us have surgical assistance.”

MR. Brooke stepped out and dispatched a servant of the house to Morpeth for a surgeon, who arrived in the space of a quarter of an hour. Upon examination of the wounds, he said the ball had passed through the muscular part of my arm, and that I had lost a great quantity of blood ; but he thought there was no danger to be apprehended from it. On viewing the wound in my breast, however, he looked more serious, and only hoped there was nothing mortal in it. He carefully dressed both wounds, and I desired him to attend me through the night. Mr. Brooke made an offer of his services, which I wished to decline ; but the good man seemed hurt at my refusal, for which I begged his forgiveness, saying, it was only from my desire to give him no trouble :— He repeated his request, and I acquiesced. Sir Robert then retired. I passed the night in uneasiness and pain ; but after a little rest which I procured in the morning, I perceived myself something better.

THUS, Benfield, we are both invalids, and are become so almost in the same cause: you in the attempt to steal a wife ; I in the defence of an honourable attachment.

LETTER XLI.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE MON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR SIR,

THE event is answerable to my expectations. You may recollect that I predicted, from the character of Mr. Fennell, your late rencounter. His precipitation and ill-usage will sufficiently vindicate you from the impeachment of malice, and justify your conduct before the impartial tribunal of reason, or the venerable laws of your country. From your description of his wound, I conclude he must be in imminent danger. His vengeance may pursue, although it may not be able to overtake you. His vindictive disposition will prompt him to the most villanous undertaking; his disappointed passion will stimulate him to the commission of any crime; the brutality of his temper, irritated by pain, anguish, and the shame of his defeat---all these causes operating upon his mind, chafed and stung with disgrace and jealousy, will precipitate him to attempt to crush the inoffensive victim of his fury by any violence or contrivance which rage can dictate or jealousy invent.

THIS dreadful idea is so strongly impressed upon my mind, that I solicit you, by all the tender ties of the most sacred friendship, to remove from your hermitage at Mitford-Grange, as soon as your health and the anguish of your pain will permit. Come to me: Benfield-Hall shall be a secure asylum until the impending storm be somewhat abated. Be assured, that if even a symptom of mortality should threaten the existence of your disappointed antagonist, his
for-

fortune, his interest, and the power of his family, will all be vigorously exerted to prosecute you to conviction. Under such circumstances, the propriety of having an immediate recourse to your relations, connections, and friends, is a measure so self-evident, that it needs not the aid of argument to persuade you to adopt it.

OH Wilton, what extraordinary events does the compass of a few months produce, to interrupt the felicity which we so vainly and so anxiously promise to ourselves in our fleeting passage through this transitory scene ! Buoyed up with every hope, however trivial ; captivated with every scheme, however fantastic ; we are hurried on from delusion to delusion, from disappointment to disappointment : and such is the unaccountable eagerness of our desires, and the ardency of our wishes, that though we readily acknowledge the futility of our pursuits, we still indulge the fond hope that they will ultimately be favoured with a happy conclusion. Happiness is the constant aim, the unceasing wish of man ; but how inconsistent are the methods we in general pursue to attain the possession of it ; how frequently are our plans defeated ; and those views which seemed to afford the brightest prospects suddenly obscured. Disappointment, however, like a bitter pill, while it disgusts the palate whets the appetite, and we renew with ardour pursuits which experience hath already demonstrated to be futile and unsatisfactory. This strange infatuation, however, may be the primal source of all our pleasures ; for since nothing here is permanent, but every thing fleeting and momentary, enjoyment brings not that reality which expectation hoped ; we therefore vainly conclude, that futurity will be more liberal, and confer the joys of a lasting fruition.

A FEW days after my unlucky adventure, your sister's maid waited upon me. She was to have accompanied my dear Antonet to Scotland, and was present during the whole of the transaction in the Wood. She informed me, that Lord Wilton upon my departure ordered the servants to release her ; and insisted upon her immediately leaving the country, without daring to enter Wilton-Hall again. She remonstrated against the cruelty and injustice of this interdiction ; reminded your father that all her clothes were at Wilton-House ; and that she had several things to settle with Lady Wilton, which could not be done without her personal attendance. He angrily replied, she could have nothing of consequence to settle ; and that if she presumed to enter his house, he could not answer for the treatment she might receive.

THE lovely object of all this distraction recovered during this conversation from the swoon into which terror and affright had thrown her ; sometimes screaming out, " Oh Benfield, Benfield ! where am I ? where are you ? " and at others, calling in a very inarticulate tone on her dear mother ; whilst Lord Wilton, insensible to her distress, railed at and reviled her for the disobedience and ingratitude with which he accused her, and commanded the servants to carry her immediately out of the Wood, mount her upon one of the horses, and ride towards the next post town.

GRIEVED and distracted at the cruel, unfeeling behaviour of Lord Wilton, she followed her young mistress at a distance through the Wood ; and, concealed by the gloom of the night, endeavoured to observe which road they took, in order to give me the earliest intelligence of it. When they came to the

the fourth avenue of the Wood, my lovely Antonet was placed behind one of the servants; and Lord Wilton at the same time mounting his horse, they rode off with all speed towards the south.

“ In this conjuncture,” she continued, “ I remained for some time utterly at a loss what to do; but it at length occurring to me that Lord Wilton would not in all probability return immediately home, I resolved to go directly to Wilton-House and inform Lady Wilton of what had happened. Perceiving on my arrival that all was quiet, I entered the house without hesitation, and went directly to Lady Wilton’s room, where I found her sitting in a very pensive attitude, listening to her daughter Sophy, who was reading by her side. She no sooner perceived me than she exclaimed, ‘ Alas! where is my daughter!’ Her eyes were fixed upon me—she trembled and turned pale. I then informed her very minutely of every incident that had happened; adding, that I was afraid Mr. Benfield was killed. ‘ Mr. Benfield killed!’ raising her hands and eyes, ‘ Merciful Heaven!’—Her hands fell—her eyes closed—she fell breathless upon the floor. Being in a dreadful consternation for my Lady, by the assistance of Sophy I raised her, and, applying the usual means for her recovery, she again came to herself. I begged pardon for the terrible fright I had given her, and hoped she would forgive me. Lady Wilton answered, ‘ Jenny, I have long known your fidelity---it hath now ruined you. Go, collect and pack up every thing you have; there is a ten pound note---a small gratuity for all your former services. Leave Wilton-Park to-night, lest Lord Wilton should return. The first opportunity you have, wait upon Mr. Benfield, and tell him I recommend you to his care.’”

“ I IMMEDIATELY obeyed my Lady’s orders,
“ and left Wilton-Park with a heart overwhelmed
“ with sorrow.”

THE poor girl in concluding this narrative wept bitterly, and I believe her grief was real. I desired her to be comforted, as I should deem it my indispensable duty to provide for her until she could obtain another place ; adding, that probably she might again have the happiness to serve her young lady. “ Heaven send that day soon !” replied she, “ for I shall never know what it is to be happy until I am assured that my sweet young lady is completely so.”

SHE retired weeping, and left me to reflect on all the horrid evils which your father’s obstinacy has brought upon his once happy family. A son banished, for not implicitly complying with commands which must have entailed misery and wretchedness upon himself to the latest period of his existence ; and, in the manly defence of his honour, now lying on a bed of languishment and horror : a daughter left, torn from her family, hurried away by the merciless hands of an enraged father, and doomed to pass her hours in unavailing sorrow amidst the solitary gloom of some rigorous confinement : a wife, the most amiable of her sex, sinking beneath the heavy pressure of domestic trouble and the bitterness of ill-usage. When will these evils terminate !—Wilton, come to me ; my patience is exhausted, and I want a little of your philosophy to calm the agitation of my mind. My wounds plague and torment me ; yet I should suffer them more patiently, could I only discover how Lord Wilton received his information.

I am, dear WILTON, ever your’s

J. B.

LETTER XLII.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

I AM very sorry to observe that you are still under the necessity of employing an amanuensis; but I hope you will, in a few days, be able to handle that dreadful weapon a goose-quill yourself.

THE perusal of your last letter disappointed me, as it neither informed me of the fate of my dear unfortunate sister, nor how the meditated elopement was discovered. This has given me some uneasiness, and I shall remain in the utmost perplexity till I am informed how you were betrayed. It appears evident to me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that my father must have had private emissaries, who apprized him of all your movements, and enabled him so unexpectedly to disconcert and prevent your schemes, on the very eve of their completion.

CONFIDENCE, Benfield, is frequently misplaced; especially among servants, who are mere dependents upon our bounty, and who very often find it more for their interest to betray the charge reposed in them, than to observe it with fidelity. The confidence founded on a reciprocation of benefits, an interchange of good offices, or a mutual attachment, possesses no lucrative incentive to induce a violation of it. But when a sordid domestic is entrusted with a secret of sufficient importance to render the discovery of it profitable, our expectation of fidelity cannot be very secure. This accusation I do not mean to level at every menial dependant. It

would be ungenerous and illiberal, thus indiscriminately to asperse the probity of those whom Providence, in his infinite wisdom, hath placed in such humble spheres, and made subservient to our ease, opulence, and pleasure.

EVERY class of mankind, from the highest to the lowest, is linked by an indissoluble chain, which cannot be destroyed, nor forcibly attacked, without a visible derangement and apparent confusion of the whole society. And though many are so supercilious as to despise the lower orders, there are others so wise and prudent as to esteem them the most useful and infinitely the most beneficial amongst the various classes of society. But enough at present of moral maxims.

I HAD an agreeable visit in the afternoon from Sir Robert, Lady Bertram, Olivia, and Mr. Brooke. Lady Bertram came running to my bedside, and anxiously enquired after my health.

I ANSWERED her kind enquiries by saying, I thought I was not much worse, though I found myself weak from my loss of blood, and hoped I should be able to sit up to-morrow.

"HERE, Mr. Wilton," said Lady Bertram, taking Olivia by the hand, and leading her to the bedside—"here is a doctor who will cure you in half the time."

I HELD out my hand to take hold of my charming angel, when Lady Bertram added, "Why don't you feel his pulse?" I saw Olivia's previous emotion, but this wild folly quite overwhelmed her with confusion. She stood motionless---her countenance was suffused with a crimson blush, and her eyes were sometimes

sometimes cast upon the floor, and sometimes wistfully upon me :---the crimson blush fled from her cheek---a livid paleness usurped its place, and I perceived in her face a visible alteration.

LADY Bertram took her hand and gave it to me, saying, "Come, come, Olivia, you are as nice and squeamish as though we did not know already the state of your heart. Poor tender thing! Indeed, Mr. Wilton, I thought it would have burst yesterday afternoon with the bare apprehension of the crack of a pistol."

OLIVIA replied, "You thought, Lady Bertram, to have deceived me, by persisting so positively that the whole affair originated from a jest; but Sir Robert's silence and evasive answers, with your assumed levity and uncommon sprightliness, confirmed my suspicions, before I was informed of the real truth by Mr. Brooke. The veil was too thin to screen the horror of the action.---And how could you, Wilton, so notoriously transgress against the sacred bonds of humanity, as to be guilty of the dreadful attempt of sending a thoughtless soul, or rushing voluntarily yourself, into the awful presence of your Omnipotent Creator, uncalled and unprepared?"

THIS was expressed with so much sweetness, with such a look of tenderness and complacency, as quite deprived me of the power of articulation for a few seconds, and prevented my immediate reply. I kept hold of her hand, and, from a consciousness of the immorality of my conduct, replied, "My dear Olivia, I am already self-condemned; do not therefore accuse me of this flagrant infringement of all laws human and divine, since I not only

“disapprove but really abhor the influence of that
 “savage custom, which has given a sanction to so
 “detestable and inhuman a practice. But believe
 “me when I assert, that whilst life animates this
 “body, no provocation, no insult whatever, shall here-
 “after stimulate me to the horrid wish of revenge.”

ALL this time Sir Robert and Mr. Brooke were in close conversation with the surgeon ; but I was so much more agreeably employed, that I never attempted to listen to one syllable they uttered, until Lady Bertram said, “Finish your consultation : I am confident in averring, that this female doctor will do
 “more by a single squeeze of the hand, than all
 “the boluses and applications which the whole Materia Medica can administer, towards restoring
 “this convalescent to his former vigour. Come
 “here, Mr. Brooke ; see, I have joined their
 “hands, do you say the ceremony.”

“O FEE, Lady Bertram,” said Olivia, “why
 “all this vivacity ? Mr. Wilton stands more in need
 “of consolation than you imagine.”

“VERY well, child,” replied Lady Bertram ; “and
 “who so proper to administer the balm of consolation to a wounded husband as a wife, yea the wife
 “of his bosom !”

OLIVIA replied with a “Psha, psha ! your rail-
 “lery, tho’ innocent, is ill-timed ;” whilst I said, “I
 “perfectly assent, Lady Bertram, to the truth of your
 “assertion : I want consolation ; and who so proper
 “to console me as the only object of my affections,
 “for whom I suffer, and for whom I here lie
 “wounded and bleeding---an alien from my family
 “—discarded by my father—my life pursued and
 “fought

“ fought for by the vindictive spirit of revenge--
 “ and against which some dreadful scheme of vengeance
 “ once may perhaps at this moment be hatching.”

“ OH WILTON ! peace, peace,” cried Olivia, gently pressing my hand by an involuntary motion.

THE pressure was so congenial to my wishes, so inspiring to my hopes, that by an intuitive impulse I attempted to rise.

“ SEE, doctor,” exclaimed Lady Bertram, “ your patient hath already forgot his infirmity, and he means to hobble to the Temple of Hymen.”

SIR Robert persuaded me to be patient, and not presume too much upon my present strength, as too early an exertion might endanger a speedy relapse. I was conscious of the impropriety of the attempt, and the anguish which I felt from the wound in my breast pleaded with so much efficacy, that I quietly disposed myself according to their admonitions.

AFTER a few scenes more of hilarity from Lady Bertram, some cautionary maxims from Sir Robert, and some very wise and prudential aphorisms from my surgeon, the company retired, and left me alone with the good Mr. Brooke ; who, seating himself by my bedside, said, “ Mr. Wilton, the anxiety which
 “ I felt for your personal safety the day on which
 “ this unfortunate duel was fought, could only be
 “ equalled by the silent yet apparent sorrow of Olivia. After I had delivered you her letter, and
 “ attempted to dissuade you from a performance of
 “ your promise by arguments which I deemed rational and solid, and to the force of which you
 “ seemed to assent, yet I departed with a full as-
 “ surance.”

" surance that you did not intend to adhere to them.
 " I found Olivia waiting for my return, and she anx-
 " iously enquired after the success of my embassy.
 " I consoled her with the hopes of your not accept-
 " ing the challenge of Mr. Fennell, but she re-
 " tired, expressing her apprehensions lest you should
 " acquiesce with so inhuman a custom.

" SHE returned next morning in company with
 " Lady Bertram. I no sooner saw her than I per-
 " ceived the perturbation of her mind. Fixing my
 " eyes stedfastly upon her, she turned away in ma-
 " nifest confusion: she was remarkably grave and
 " sedate, and wished to conceal her uneasiness under
 " an assumed solemnity. I admired the coolness of
 " her demeanour, although I supposed I saw some-
 " thing of constraint. Lady Bertram said, ' Mr.
 " Brooke, shall I depute you to go and call upon Mr.
 " Wilton, and if he has no business of importance,
 " bring him to the Vicarage with you. We will
 " wait here for your return.' I came, but found
 " you not. When I returned, and informed the la-
 " dies you had walked forth, Lady Bertram looked
 " at Olivia very seriously.—Olivia was silent---her
 " colour changed---a heavy sigh heaved her swelling
 " bosom. Lady Bertram arose, and, going towards
 " her, took her hand, saying, ' Shall we, my dear,
 " walk home ?' Being answered in the affirmative,
 " I was requested to accompany them. When we
 " arrived, Sir Robert was gone out. Olivia retired
 " to her chamber, and continuing there much longer
 " than usual, Lady Bertram was anxious for her re-
 " turn. Lady Bertram walked up stairs, and pre-
 " sently returning with much anxiety in her counte-
 " nance, desired that I would follow her; adding, ' I
 " will shew you a sight worthy of an angel.' She walk-
 " ed gently forward, and I followed. We approached
 " a door

“ a door that was half open :-- there we observed
 “ Olivia upon her knees---her hands were clasped---
 “ her eyes cast upwards---her words we heard very
 “ indistinctly, but what we could collect were fervent
 “ petitions to the God of Mercy for the protection
 “ of your person. After she had finished her devo-
 “ tions, she sobbed deeply ; but after a short inter-
 “ val her tears gave a relief to her sorrow. Hav-
 “ ing somewhat composed herself, she arose, and in-
 “ stantly espied us. Lady Bertram entered, and
 “ leading her forth, her confusion was so manifest at
 “ our discovery, that she hid her blushes with her
 “ handkerchief. Being come into the parlour, she
 “ said, ‘ Oh Lady Bertram, was it well done,
 “ thus to break in upon my privacy !’----‘ My dear
 “ Olivia, an anxiety for your peace, and not curiosity,
 “ was the only motive which led me to your chamber.
 “ Forgive me, my dear, and do not be ashamed
 “ because Mr. Brooke hath witnessed the goodness
 “ of your heart.’---‘ Ah, Madam, but I have be-
 “ trayed the weakness of my heart, already torn
 “ with anguish.’---Her grief became too powerful,
 “ and her tears began to flow, notwithstanding all
 “ her efforts to prevent them ---‘ Forgive me, Lady
 “ Bertram,---forgive me, Mr. Brooke ;’---and she
 “ hurried out of the room.

“ I CAME again to call upon you, but you were
 “ not returned. My fears were prevalent and bod-
 “ ing. I waited above an hour. Upon my return
 “ to Bertram-Hall, Sir Robert had rode out, and
 “ sent his servant home upon some frivolous pretence.
 “ This, with other concurring circumstances, cor-
 “ roborated my suspicions, and convinced me that
 “ the horrid work of death was going forward. I could
 “ no longer conceal my solicitude, Lady Bertram per-
 “ ceived it, and said, ‘ I adjure you, Mr. Brooke, not

“ to keep me in suspense ; has any misfortune be-
“ fallen Mr. Wilton ?”---Olivia entered, and heard
“ the last part of the sentence. She looked earnestly
“ on Lady Bertram, then upon me—was silent :—
“ her fears presaged the worst—she stood like a sta-
“ tue riveted to the spot. I led her to a chair, and
“ seating her, I observed her eye to be fixed--her
“ features were immoveable, and she remained in-
“ sensible to all our cares, solicitations, and enqui-
“ ries. Lady Bertram tenderly kissed her, looked
“ wistfully at me, and wrung her hands in silent an-
“ guish. At last she said, ‘ Alas, Mr. Brooke !—
“ my dear child, my dear child !’—I endeavoured
“ to console her, and advised that Olivia should be
“ put to bed. This was complied with, and she re-
“ mained in a state of torpid insensibility, or rather
“ delirium, for above an hour. Lady Bertram
“ wept, kissed her, and fondly hung over her,
“ lamenting the unhappiness of her situation. At
“ length a deep sigh burst from her bosom :—she
“ turned her head toward Lady Bertram, and per-
“ ceiving her overwhelmed with sorrow, held out
“ her hand, saying, ‘ What makes my dear Lady
“ Bertram weep ?’—‘ God be praised for this reco-
“ very !’ said Lady Bertram ; ‘ how do you find
“ yourself, my dear child ?’—‘ Rather sick ; I hope I
“ shall be better presently.’—I left her to the care
“ of Lady Bertram, and silently took my leave.

“ SHORTLY after Sir Robert entered.—Olivia,
“ who was very quiet before his entrance, was now
“ violently agitated. Lady Bertram trembled :---
“ but after taking Sir Robert aside, and talking with
“ him a-while, she came to the bed-side, and said,
“ My dear Olivia, be comforted, Mr. Wilton is
“ well—the dreadful business is compromised.’---‘ Ah,
“ Lady Bertram, do you not deceive me ?’—‘ Let
“ Sir

“ Sir Robert, who was present, assure you of the
“ truth.’—Sir Robert came forward, and, taking
“ her hand and tenderly kissing it, said, ‘ Believe
“ me, my dear child, Mr. Wilton is returned safe to
“ the Grange.’—She received his assurance with ap-
“ parent pleasure—her countenance brightened, and
“ her spirits seemed to assume their wonted vigour.
“ Observing this happy change in Olivia, Sir Ro-
“ bert favoured them with a true account of the un-
“ fortunate affair.

“ LADY Bertram, who informed me of these last
“ particulars, said, she was afraid of a fever, as
“ some slight symptoms appeared ; but by the timely
“ operation of some medical assistance, they soon
“ disappeared. She had a quiet night, and slept
“ profoundly, by which she was enabled to walk
“ abroad this morning. And thus, Mr. Wilton, I
“ have given you a true account of what this sweet
“ young lady hath suffered from her affection to
“ you.”

“ Mr. Brooke,” I replied, “ for all this sincere
“ attention I can only repay you with my thanks.
“ Fortune, I hope, will one day prove more propi-
“ tious, when I shall be enabled to return your bene-
“ volence and acknowledge your kindness in a man-
“ ner that is suitable to my wish and deserving of
“ your approbation. At present I feel no pain.
“ Convinced, from your recital, that I am blest with
“ the affections of my dear Olivia, this conviction
“ will operate more toward my recovery than all
“ the medicines which art can administer. Mr.
“ Brooke, be so obliging as to call in the evening ;
“ the surgeon will retire soon, and by your assistance
“ I will attempt to rise, as I do not think I am either
“ so ill or so weak as he endeavours to persuade me.”

MR.

MR. Brooke promised that he would call upon me, and left the room.

THUS, Benfield, I am happy in imagination ; but when I reflect upon your disaster, in the very moment when you least expected it, my happiness vanishes, and leaves nothing behind but a dreary void.

INCLOSED you have a copy of a letter which I have received from my father, with my answer to it.

LETTER XLIII.

FROM THE EARL OF WILTON TO THE HON.

MR. WILTON.

SIR,

HAVING taken a determined resolution to sell the Wilton estate, and as your acquiescence will somewhat facilitate the business, I request that you will give your consent. The highest legal authority has been consulted on the practicability of my purpose ; and as there is no difficulty, no obstacle, which can prevent me from executing my intention, your ready coincidence will gratify me more than your opposition can impede the execution.

As a voluntary gratuity for your obedience in this exigence, you shall receive the sum of ten thousand pounds, on condition of relinquishing all future claims to the estate. This sum you may probably not deem equivalent to the sacrifice you are requested to make ; but then I beg you to consider, I have it in my power to execute what I require of you without any compensation.

penfation whatever. This confideration ought to have its due influence in your final decision, as I offer it from a wifh that you may live independent through life, without being compelled to have recourfe to any difhonourable employment to procure a scanty fubfiftence.

THIS care for your future fupport proceeds from the fmall remains of parental affection which even your ingratitude hath not yet obliterated in my bofom ; and it folely depends upon your own conduct in the prefent inftance, whether they fhall be cherifhed or totally eradicated. You are confcious that your oppofition to my will, when I was planning a fcheme for your felicity, deferves my fevereft reprehenfion ; and although your difobedience hath forfeited my efteem, yet my parental regard fuggelts this propofition for your future welfare.

If you confent for the fum of ten thoufand pounds to forego all right and claim to the Wilton eftate, you may fignify your approbation by the return of the poft. If you withhold your confent, beware of the confequences.

I remain,
Your much offended,
injured, and infulted father,
WILTON.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO THE
EARL OF WILTON.

HONOURED FATHER,

I AM favoured with your Letter relative to the sale of the Wilton estate, and I must confess that I was not more surpris'd at the perusal, than astonish'd at the very extraordinary measure which it suggests. My conduct, if faulty, is certainly pardonable ; and if I have only offended in one instance, why, Sir, should I for ever forfeit my claim to the Wilton estate and to your affection ? Oh reconsider the business ; think I am your only son ; let the affection of a parent plead in my behalf, and certainly you will not then determine to disinherit me. Forgive this single instance of disobedience, and it shall be the study of my future life to please, to serve, to reverence you.

WHY, oh why, my ever-honoured father, should I be cast away, an alien from your affection, a lonely wanderer through the dangerous labyrinths of life ! Let my penitence atone for my seeming ingratitude, and let my future behaviour be the test of my unalienable affection for you. If you can place any reliance on the assurances of a son who hath once, and only once, offended you, I hereby most solemnly promise never to marry any woman without your consent and approbation. Let this extenuate my crime and palliate my offence ; let me return with joy to the embraces of a father, the endearments of a mother, and the sweet intercourse of my beloved sisters. Why
should

should we be separated? Every trespass of this kind is certainly venial; and if we forgive not, how shall we expect to be forgiven at the day of final retribution?

YOUR proposal, my honoured father, I am sorry to acquaint you, meets not with my acquiescence. Ten thousand pounds is a poor equivalent for such a sacrifice as you require; and though I reject your requisition, I hope you will not construe this rejection as a fresh instance of my disobedience. It is a duty which I owe to you, to myself, to my family, to posterity; and whatever sentiment my refusal may at present excite in your mind, I hope you will one day acknowledge that my conduct is not reprehensible.

PRESENT my duty and love to my honoured mother and sisters, assuring them, my heart lives with them at Wilton-Park.

I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

MR. Brooke called upon me in the evening, according to his promise. The surgeon, after dressing my wounds, had left me about half an hour before. He kindly enquired what was the surgeon's opinion, and if I supposed there would be any danger in attempting to rise, as I had expressed an eager desire to try the experiment.

“Pshaw,

“ Pshaw, Mr. Brooke, I do not mean, I assure
“ you, to lie lingering here until the surgeon pro-
“ nounce his professional *fiat*, and tell me that I
“ am well. Lend me your hand.”

He immediately gave me what assistance I required, and I arose without much difficulty, dressed without any pain, but did not attempt to put on my coat. Throwing it over my shoulders, I walked across the floor, and was scarcely sensible of any weakness or infirmity.

SITTING down, I told Mr. Brooke that I had no particular relish for the pills and the potions prescribed by my surgical director, and hoped he would be so obliging as to turn the key of my closet, and set a bottle of wine upon the table. He smiled at my orders, but did not hesitate to execute them. I then asked him, if he had heard any report concerning Mr. Fennell. He said that he had not heard one syllable.

WE had not sat many minutes, when my hostess entered, and told me, there was a woman at the door, of the name of Moreton, who desired to speak with me. I requested she might be shewn in.

SHE entered—anxiety and apprehension were pictured in her looks.

I DESIRED her to be seated.

SHE said, “ I hope, Sir, you will pardon my intrusion. My sorrow for your misfortune prompted
“ me to call and enquire after your health, as I
“ should deem myself devoid of gratitude if I had neg-
“ lected

“lected this duty to a gentleman whose bounty hath
“given peace to my days, and saved the precious
“lives of my innocent children.”

“Mrs. Moreton, your gratitude and kindness
“have more than repaid me. May your days continue
“peaceful, and your children live to be a comfort
“and support to your age!” I added, that I was
much better, and hoped in a few days to be perfectly
recovered.

“I SHALL thank the God of Heaven,” replied she,
“for his providential interposition in your favour,
“in protecting the friend of the widow and the orphan
“from such imminent danger, and I shall teach
“my children to pray for your life and safety. They
“found a father in you, when their natural father
“forsook them, and left them, poor, helpless suppli-
“ants, to the mercy of a ruthless world.”

HER complaint recalled to her mind the painful
memory of some happy scenes in the former part of
life—she wiped away the tear as it rolled down her
cheek, and endeavoured to suppress her grief:—her
attempt was in vain—she arose, dismissed, and re-
tired.

I FORGOT to mention to you, that I have frequently met this worthy woman at the Vicarage, and concerted various schemes for her future support; and at last, by the advice of Mr. Brooke, I have determined to set her up in a shop, by which she may be enabled to provide for herself and little ones. Should she succeed, I shall at least enjoy the happiness of reflecting, that I have administered consolation to the wretched, mitigated the pang of misery, and given the means of support to hunger and despair.

This

This, Benfield, will afford a pleasure of which pride need not be ashamed to boast, and gives me now more solid satisfaction and real joy than all the sensual pleasures of which the most dissipated libertine can participate. It is lasting, and will bear the recollection; whilst the turpitude of all sensual gratifications grates upon the memory, impairs the constitution, and leaves behind it a hateful deformity.

WE finished our bottle with cheerfulness, and I was very sensible that it operated more effectually towards the revival of my spirits and the invigoration of my health, than if I had drank water-gruel for twelve months.

THREE days passed without any thing happening that is worthy of recapitulation. On the fourth I found myself so much recovered, that I dressed and walked to Bertram-Hall. I was congratulated on my appearance abroad by the worthy family with all the sincerity of unfeigned friendship. Olivia alone seemed melancholy and pensive; and as I could not divine the cause, I felt all the pangs of jealousy and discontent. So thin is the partition which separates happiness from misery, that we frequently experience the extremes of pleasure and of pain in the revolution of a few minutes. She was standing in a musing posture before the window. I advanced towards her, and tenderly enquired the cause of her seriousness; when she sighed and said, "Oh, Mr. Wilton, I am born to be unhappy—I am really the child of "misfortune"—and then abruptly left the room.

THE gloom which her sorrowful expressions and abrupt departure spread over my mind was visible to Sir Robert and Lady Bertram.

SIR Robert addressing himself to me, asked if I was well.

"VERY

“VERY well, Sir Robert, but I am dejected by
“ the dread that Olivia is a victim to some corroding
“ melancholy.”

“I HOPE not,” replied Lady Bertram; “but
“ her emotions have of late been extremely violent;
“ and her efforts to conceal them may have produced
“ some effect upon her delicate frame. The anxie-
“ ties her mind has lately experienced are too much
“ for her strength, but I hope a few days will per-
“ fectly re-establish her health.”

“ADDED to this,” said Sir Robert, “Mr. Long-
“ ford was here yesterday, and seemed much more
“ deranged than usual, as he was quite importunate
“ with Olivia to appoint their wedding-day. This
“ delusive idea he has long harboured, and being ap-
“ prized of your rencounter with Mr. Fennell, he
“ laughs immoderately at the duel, reprehends the
“ folly of the combatants, and says he shall be the
“ happy man, though you fight it over again. The
“ unhappy state of his intellects seems to have had
“ some effect upon Olivia, as she is more pensive
“ and thoughtful than she was before he came.”

I WALKED into the garden, and found the lovely
creature sitting in the arbour, with her cheek reclined
upon her hand. She was reading with profound at-
tention, but on my walking towards her she arose;
and I perceived that the subject of her meditation was
“SHERLOCK on *Death*.” I asked her, why she chose
so melancholy an entertainment?

SHE answered, “The subject, Mr. Wilton, is
“ momentous; and since it is a debt we must all one
“ day pay, it behoves us to consider it seriously,
“ that we may discharge it with a becoming forti-
“ tude.”

I WISHED

I WISHED to divert her thoughts from this melancholy contemplation, and replied, " I coincide with
" your observations ; but may I presume to enquire
" the cause of those expressions which you uttered,
" when you left the parlour ?"

" HAVE I not sufficient cause, Sir ? Am I not the
" cause, the innocent involuntary cause, of all the
" various disasters which the compass of a few days
" have produced ?"

" LET not, my dearest Olivia, the remembrance
" of such egregious folly prey upon your mind
" and disturb your peace. It is now over ; it will
" be forgotten and buried in oblivion in less time
" than it was in the contrivance."

" AH Mr. Wilton, you are not apprized of the
" dark complexion of Mr. Fennell's character. I
" have had reason to investigate his disposition, and
" I am thoroughly satisfied that his malice, however
" latent, is as active as it is inveterate, and will not
" easily be disappointed or subdued. You will be
" the object of his unrelenting vengeance, if he lives ;
" and if he dies, a prospect still more melancholy
" presents itself to my view."

" AND are you, my angel, so thoughtful for my
" safety ? Lay aside your fears. I trust in an all-
" seeing Providence and the laws of my country for
" protection."

" AH Wilton ! my fears are ominous."

" LET them then, Olivia, presage happiness and
" returning hilarity to our bosoms !"

I PUT one arm round her waist, the other was flung in a handkerchief. "Shall I hope, that when the cheering ray of comfort dissipates your present fears, shall I presume to hope, that you will deign to establish my happiness on a lasting basis, by accepting of one who is altogether unworthy of you?"

"BELIEVE me, Wilton, I am above disguise, and have not a wish at present to conceal the bias of my heart from you; but, however inclination may plead in your favour, there are circumstances in my case which may operate as impediments with you, which will not be easily developed. You must spare me the recital—it is delicate---it would be afflictive—I ingenuously refer you to Sir Robert."

"WHAT circumstances, Olivia, can impede our union, founded on a reciprocal affection? You refer me to Sir Robert: to him I will then immediately apply, and solicit his consent to a speedy consummation of our mutual happiness."

"BE not too precipitate, Sir, nor yet too sanguine. Happiness is not always the reward of mutual affection; and the more eager your expectation, the more fatal may be your disappointment."

"TALK not of disappointment, my Olivia; can I be unhappy when possessed of you?"

I IMPRESSED a fervid kiss upon her lips---she permitted it without reluctance---our embraces were reciprocal---my extacy inexpressible.

IN this tender union of affection we were assailed with the exclamation of "Oh, oh, have I caught you?"

“ you ! What, billing in my presence, and with my
“ wife !”

MR. Longford was standing opposite to us, and he continued his rhapsodical exclamation as follows :

“ My time, O ye Muses, I happily spent,
“ When Phœbe went with me wherever I went.

“ My grandmother sung that song delightfully---I
“ will not be jealous---jealousy is a rank weed, it
“ grows in every clime.—Blow, blow, ye winds ;
“ ye trees, shake.---Come, come, Olivia, let us go
“ to Mr. Brooke, he will marry us immediately.”

“ Not at present, Mr. Longford, you must excuse me,” replied Olivia.

“ WHAT are you afraid of ?” returned he : “ Marriage is not a poor's tax.

“ The lasses of Tyne
“ They go so fine,
“ We'll all to coquet and woo.—

“ Our chamber-maid sings that sweetly.”

“ Poor soul !” said Olivia, “ what would I give for the restoration of thy intellects ?”

“ Do you pity me, Olivia ? Here, take this
“ woodbine ; smell it---it is very sweet, and won't
“ do you half the harm that a bloody husband will.
“ --Hush, hush, don't tell secrets.—Blood, blood,
“ wounds, gaping wounds, are not fit companions
“ for a lady's ear. I'll fight none, Olivia---

“ Assume the God, affect the nod,
“ And seem to shake the spheres.—

“ Blood cries for blood.”

ALL this time I held Olivia's hand grasped in mine.—She trembled---I looked at her---her colour changed to a deadly pale.

“LET us go, Mr. Wilton,” said she, in a whisper, “and let me advise you to withdraw. Your presence adds to his disorder.”

I WISHED her to avoid his company, as it seemed to discompose her ; and, recommending her to be particularly attentive to her own health, I left her sighing for poor Mr. Longford.

LETTER XLVI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR SIR,

THAT I might not be interrupted in my application to Sir Robert by the unseasonable intervention of poor Longford, I sent a card to the former, requesting the honour of his company in the evening. He was punctual in his attendance.

BEING seated, I addressed him thus : “Sir Robert, “it was with your permission that I first paid my addresses to Olivia ; and having been so fortunate as “to merit her attention, she has ingenuously referred me to you for a developement of some mysterious circumstances relative to herself, which she “candidly confesses it would be extremely afflicting to her mind to relate.”

“MR. Wilton,” answered Sir Robert, “it was “never my wish to lay the least restraint upon “the inclinations of Olivia : I always deemed
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“ her capable of judging and determining for herself, even in the important article of marriage. Conscious of her propriety in chusing a partner for life, I have carefully attended to the bias of her affections, in the many liberal offers with which she hath been honoured; and I candidly acknowledge, that she hath not upon the present occasion, deceived me.”

“ Your partiality, Sir Robert, I confess does me honour, and I hope our *alliance* will not diminish it.”

“ HERE, Mr. Wilton, you are probably under a mistake. Your *alliance* with Olivia will prove none with my family. She is no daughter, she is no relation of mine, as common fame reports her. You seem amazed! Believe me, what I assert is nothing but the truth. You have acted openly and generously. I know you to be the son and heir of Lord Wilton. At present suppress your curiosity. The day that unites your hands, a fortune of fifty thousand pounds awaits you. This I give to the merit of my adopted daughter.”

“ ALTHOUGH, Sir Robert, you have excited my curiosity, I wish not to pry further than your candour will allow.”

“ MR. Wilton, before your union is completed, every particular relative to the lady shall be explained to your satisfaction.”

“ MY warmest acknowledgements are due to your friendship, Sir Robert.”

“ No complimentary apology, Mr. Wilton.—I am amazed we hear nothing of Mr. Fennell; I hope

“hope his wounds are not dangerous; and yet the
“silence that seems to reign upon this subject is cer-
“tainly no favourable preface.”

“WHATEVER be the event, Sir Robert, I shall
“calmly await the decision of the laws of my
“country. I was insulted, challenged, dragged
“into the necessity of self-defence; and if I have
“been so fortunate as to be the instrument to chast-
“ise such insolence, I shall firmly rely on that
“Power who will not finally suffer Innocence to be
“wronged, and Arrogance to triumph.”

AFTER a short general conversation Sir Robert retired.

THE next morning, being anxious to acquaint the worthy Mr. Brooke with my success, and the hopes which I have now reason to entertain of my future happiness, I went to the Vicarage; but, alas! the good man was---no more! One of those fatal accidents to which this chequered life is liable, and which human prudence can neither foresee nor prevent, had suddenly deprived this benevolent man of his existence.

WHEN I came to the gate, I observed a croud of people by the side of the river. I walked towards them---a silent sorrow reigned amongst them--they were the inhabitants of the village. I enquired the cause why they were assembled there; when one of them pointing with his finger---I looked,---and, oh Benfield! beheld a sight of woe! Poor Brooke was lying on the margin of the WANSBECK, cold, stiff, and lifeless.

He had been sent for to baptize a child early in the morning. Upon his return the river had risen

above its usual level--there was no other passage than by means of stones placed about two feet asunder, and piled one upon the other near three feet high---the water just running over them:---he had slipped off one of the stones, and was unfortunately drowned.

I DESIRED them to bear home the body, and walked to Bertram-Hall to acquaint the family with the misfortune. I no sooner entered than I perceived they were already apprized of the loss of their real Christian Pastor.

SIR Robert was sitting with his arms folded, leaning against the back of his chair, pensive and thoughtful.

LADY Bertram had been in tears, but her grief was somewhat abated.

OLIVIA was sitting with Sherlock in her hand. As soon as she saw me, she said, "Oh Mr. Wilton, poor " Mr. Brooke is" — her grief overcame her, and her tears plentifully bedewed her pallid cheeks.

I ATTEMPTED to console her, but the fullness of my own heart totally frustrated my intention. I asked Sir Robert if he would walk to the Vicarage, as our presence in this melancholy exigence might prove consolatory.

"RIGHT," said Sir Robert, starting from his reverie---"Poor Brooke! you deserved a better fate." "Let us go."

WHEN we entered, Mrs. Brooke presented to our eyes the very image of Distraction, but not actuated by the silent springs of sorrow. She was tearing her hair,

hair, beating her breast, and raving with all the wildness of a maniac. I condoled with her, and endeavoured, by a variety of arguments, to alleviate her seeming distress. She listened, became more rational, and at last her grief subsided into a placid calm. In the mean time, Sir Robert was giving directions for the future funeral, as Mrs. Brooke seemed wholly incapacitated for so sorrowful a charge.

ON the day of interment, all the inhabitants of the parish assembled in the church-yard, with anxiety and sorrow, to see their worthy and benevolent Pastor laid in the grave. During the ceremony these grateful mourners were silent, solemn, and attentive; but when the body was committed to the earth, "*ashes to ashes, dust to dust,*" their grief could no longer be restrained, and the whole company burst into tears; there was not one dry eye to be seen. The grave being closed up, some of them returned in sorrow to their homes, but many individuals remained upon the spot, recounting his virtues, and descanting on his humility and piety. This I deem to be the worthiest tribute that can be paid to the memory of a Minister of the Gospel.

MR. Brooke had been twice married; and by his first wife had one daughter, who had lived with her grandfather by the mother's side since his second marriage, which was not approved of by his relations. She was about sixteen, graceful, lovely, and in her grief more beautiful. She was inconsolable for the loss of her beloved father: an endeavour to assuage her sorrow gave birth to the following Elegy.

THE ORPHAN:

AN ELEGY.

I.

WHERE silver WANSBECK rolls his crystal tide,
 And laves the margin with a gurgling surge;
 While willows weeping on its rufhy fide
 Pour to the hollow gale a mournful dirge;

II.

The gentle ANNA, 'neath a branching plane,
 Whose ample foliage spread a deep'ning shade,
 Wail'd to the breezes, in a sorrowing strain,
 The sweetest mourner, and the fairest maid.

III.

Just sixteen summers o'er her head had run,
 Her bosom just had heav'd the tender sigh;
 And rosy Health and sprightly Love begun
 To tinge her cheek, and glitten in her eye.

IV.

But now her locks play'd loosely in the breeze,
 Her modest vesture careless trail'd behind;
 Her face no longer beam'd with smiles of ease,
 But mark'd the rooted troubles of her mind.

V.

The broad-orb'd regent of the parting day
 Had flaming sunk beneath yon western hill;
 His beams no more upon old WANSBECK play,
 No more they glitter on yon tinkling rill.

VI.

The white-rob'd regent of the silent night
 Just peep'd with silver radiance from the sea ;
 To rest the warbler wing'd his rapid flight,
 To rest the plover whistled o'er the lea;

VII.

The howling wind in solemn silence hush'd,
 Of the tall pine scarce mov'd a tremulous leaf ;
 No footstep rude along the meadow brush'd,
 Where ANNA lay with feelings lost in grief.

VIII.

At this calm hour, beneath the plane-tree's shade,
 The gentle mourner, with complexion wan,
 Where verdant moss a velvet carpet made,
 Heav'd her sad bosom, and in tears began :

XI.

" Thou parent stream, along whose sedgey bed
 With vacant mind, my infant years I pass'd,
 Now o'er thy pebbles roll thy hateful tide,
 The gloom of sorrow o'er my brow is cast.

X.

" No more, with playful step, upon thy brink,
 I'll cheerful lead the choral band along ;
 Nor view thy finny tenants sport and drink,
 Nor tread thy margin 'midst the laughing throng.

XI.

" The modest flow'rets that adorn thy bank,
 Which oft I've cull'd to weave the vernal wreath ;
 The primrose pale, the golden cowslip dank,
 Shall bloom untouch'd, and the lone wanderer please.

XII.

" To these sweet pastimes here I bid adieu !
Which joy and comfort gave my youthful mind,
When every morn brought Pleasure to my view ;
For Pleasure's fled, and Woe pursues behind.

XIII.

" Thou silent moon, that from thy silver sphere
Dost sleeping mortals watch with social ray,
Could'st thou no aid afford a parent dear,
No glimmering beam to guide his wat'ry way ?

XIV.

" O cruel WANSBECK, once my much-lov'd stream,
Which fondly I've in lisping accents sung !
Made thee from morn till night my darling theme,
While to my father's fond embrace I clung ;

XV.

" That dear-lov'd father, who in hapless hour,
'Midst the dark horrors of night's dreary gloom,
Sunk 'midst thy billows, whilst no friendly power
Was near to save him from his hapless doom !

XVI.

" O cruel WANSBECK, why did roaring waves
Burst from their sources in that evil hour,
And the green margin which thy current laves,
O'erwhelm, at once, with such resistless power.

XVII.

" Had but the eye of some fond friend beheld
The treacherous step which plung'd him in the wave,
A prompt assistance had his fate repell'd,
And sav'd him, timely, from the wat'ry grave.

XVIII. "For

XVIII.

" For who could see without a weeping eye,
 Who could behold, and no assistance give,
 A fellow-creature 'midst these billows lie,
 Who vainly struggled, and who wish'd to live !

XIX.

" But ah ! he's gone : and who, with watchful eye,
 Shall lead my youthful steps to ripen'd age,
 Point to the scene where lurking dangers lie,
 Correct my faults, my throbbing woes assuage ?

XX.

" My other parent, gentle, just, and wise,
 Her infant offspring scarcely ever knew ;
 For while her fostering bosom hush'd my cries,
 Her heavenly spirit to its region flew.

XXI.

" On the wide world an helpless orphan thrown,
 What generous friendship will my wants supply ?
 Ah ! none ; for now, unfriended and alone,
 THE WORLD will view me with unfeeling eye.

XXII.

" Who now will kindly teach my tender mind
 To choose the good, the evil courses shun ?
 Shew me what VIRTUE has in truth design'd
 For those who from all vicious courses run ?

XXIII.

" Drear is the prospect which around me lies ;
 What sad ideas wring my troubled soul,
 While sovereign REASON the dread conflict flies,
 Which should wild PASSION'S turbid rage controul !

XXIV.

"How sweet, how pleasing, was my early dawn,
 No sable clouds obscur'd the bright serene;
 Gay social comforts met me on the lawn,
 And kindly led me to the charming scene.

XXV.

But ah! how transient was their sullen date!
 From my frail grasp they fled in wrath away;
 Stern were the mandates of unfeeling Fate;
 And Joy's faint glimpses like a winter's day.

XXVI.

"Thou gentle spirit, if from realms on high
 Thou now behold'st thy mournful daughter laid
 Beneath this covert, heal her throbbing sigh,
 And sooth the anguish of a weeping maid!

XXVII.

"The keen rebuke from every chiding tongue,
 Will gladly make my sad *dependence* known;
 And bitter taunts, with dire aspersions hung,
 Destroy my peace—now my dear father's gone!

XXVIII.

"What eye but sheds the sympathetic tear
 At the sad tale replete with ghastly woe;
 What breast but feels the soft contagion near,
 When sighs and tears from kindred bosoms flow!

XXIX.

"Yes, there is one, one ever-shameless eye
 That neither wept, nor join'd the general grief;
 A wife, foul ingrate! heav'd not Sorrow's sigh;
 Her bosom knows not Sorrow's soft relief.

XXX.

XXX.

" Can I forget that ever-mournful sight,
 (Oh blot it out from memory's woeful page !)
When I beheld my father's wretched plight,
 The bloated victim of the water's rage ?

XXXI.

" Whilst circling TIME rolls on its rapid wheel,
 And Life's warm current swells my youthful veins,
Shall I forget what my young heart did feel,
 When first I saw thy streaming bloody stains !

XXXII.

" Thrice I attempted, but my powers fail'd ;
 Lifeless I fell before the awful door ;
Thrice more I strain'd, ere once my strength prevail'd,
 All pale and weak, to quit the crimson'd floor.

XXXIII.

" The deep impression, with a harrowing gloom,
 Sunk in my mind : each vital feeling bled.
My peace, my pleasure's buried in yon tomb ;
 And every joy with my dear father fled.

XXXIV.

" Thou genial power of soft refreshing sleep,
 Where art thou gone, and with thee my delight !
I leave my pillow o'er my woes to weep,
 And wail away the weary gloom of night."

XXXV.

Thus ANNA ended ;—and her pallid cheek
 Sunk on her shoulder, with a fainting eye ;
Her faltering accents Sorrow's gripe bespeak,
 Whilst from her bosom burst Affliction's sigh ;

XXXVI.

When thro' the void a glimmering radiance shot,
 And faint illum'd the verdant scene around ;
 Two aerial Beings gleam'd upon the spot,
 Where the fair mourner wept along the ground.

XXXVII.

One rous'd fresh anguish in her drooping breast,
 For all the FATHER clearly she could trace ;
 The other smil'd, in sweet complacence dress'd,
 And fancy painted her fond MOTHER's face.

XXXVIII.

" Why weeps my child ?" the tender FATHER said---
 " Why sinks she sadly 'neath this load of grief?
 Tho' in the grave my mouldering body's laid,
 Where Life's misfortunes find a sure relief,

XXXIX.

" Full were my years upon the mortal stage---
 The only wish that warp'd my feeling mind,
 Was but to live to train thy infant age,
 That when I dy'd thou might'st not grieve behind.

XL.

" Dread Fate forbade !" — The gentle MOTHER spoke,
 A smile of pity smooth'd her placid brow,
 " Weep, not, my child, at this tremendous stroke,
 Tho' long, long since, death loos'd my bridal vow.

XLI.

" Dread not pale Want, that ever-ghastly foe,
 Dread not keen insult from the scoffing world ;
 All have their portion of corroding woe,
 And deep affliction o'er each head is hurl'd.

XLII.

" In yon lone shades behold my reverend fire,
 Whose silver locks upon his shoulders play ;
 There see my sisters still with love aspire
 To smoothe his passage on Life's chequer'd way.

XLIII.

" They shall supply a tender mother's care,
 With sweet compassion feed thy early wants ;
 Whilst he with pleasure hears thy morning prayer
 For that support his liberal kindness grants.

XLIV.

" Then cease thy weeping, nor hereafter mourn ;
 Again we'll meet near HEAVEN's seraphic throne ;
 But never more can we to thee return,
 'Twixt this dread Now and thy life's parting groan."

XLV.

These words pronounc'd, the pleasing vision fled ;
 A sable darkness wrapt in night the green ;
 The gentle mourner left her mossy bed,
 And long remember'd the instructive scene.

You will perceive that some days have elapsed since the commencement of this letter, during which time I have not heard a syllable relative to Mr. Fennell. I must frankly acknowledge, that although I was ill-treated by him in the extreme, I am very solicitous to know the state of his health. If his wounds should prove mortal, I have entailed upon myself a never-dying sting of wretchedness. I might have refused to meet him ; and however dishonourable this conduct would have appeared in the eyes of the world, it would have brought more peace to my own mind, than I shall ever again experience on the event of his death.

SIR

SIR Robert informed me this morning that Mrs. Brooke, with all the insensibility of an inanimate substance, with all the callous cruelty to which the sex should be total strangers, packed up what moveables she could carry, and decamped late last night leaving her two innocent babes to the mercy of the wide world. Sir Robert, with a characteristic clemency, hath taken them under his care, with an intention to educate and bring them up in a manner that is suitable to their birth and expectations.

DURING this conversation he acquainted me with some traits in the character of Mrs. Brooke which are not very amiable, and which had for some years rendered the mind of her unfortunate husband extremely unhappy. The little cherubs while we were talking slipped out of the room: on missing them, I walked to the Vicarage, supposing of course they were gone to their former home.

I FOUND them in the parlour, with their hands clasped together, weeping and crying for their mamma.

JUST as I entered the elder was saying, "Oh William, we shall never see papa more---no more
 " ---he is dead and buried in the church-yard; but
 " where is mamma?"

"I DON'T know, Charles---mamma is not dead;
 " she put us to bed last night."—

THE maid was endeavouring to comfort them, although her tears flowed as fast as theirs.---"Poor babies! I am afraid you will never see your mamma more!"

"WHAT

"WHAT for, Hannah?" cried the eldest; "I am
 " sure we never offended mamma; why shall we see
 " her no more?"

I WAS truly affected with their innocence and grief
 and taking them both by the hands, said, "Come,
 " my dear children, go with me to the Hall---weep
 " no more."

"MR. Wilton," replied Charles, "will you tell me
 " where papa is? Mamma told me he was gone
 " from home. When will he come back?"

I WAS at a loss what to answer to such sweet sim-
 plicity; yet said, "My dear Charles, your papa is
 " in heaven; you will meet him there."

"COME then, Mr. Wilton, let us go; I want to
 " see my papa."

WE walked to Bertram-Hall, and I requested of
 Sir Robert to allow me to take the charge of my
 pretty cowslip-gatherer, promising to be particularly
 attentive to his conduct and education. Sir Robert
 complied; and it shall be my anxious care to exe-
 cute this task with punctuality, as the only return I
 can make to the memory of a worthy man, whose
 civility I shall long remember, whose unhappy fate
 I shall ever regret.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

DEAR BENFIELD,

IF ever superstition had any influence upon my mind, it is at this present moment ; for I begin to suspect that the malice of my father's imprecation is now beginning to pursue me. But whether this idea proceeds from the solemn stillness which pervades the gloomy confines of the prison in which I am now inclosed, or that these melancholy reflections are intailed by fate upon the children of disobedience, I will not at present pretend to determine. I should hope the impression results solely from the horror of these dreary walls, and the terror which malicious accusation must impose on every mind. The stones which surround me are bedaubed with fallow green, the produce of filth, and the silent working hand of Time ; and the crystal drops, which glitter on them, indicate a chilly moisture, arising from a stagnant and putrid air.

MURDER, Benfield, has a horrid sound ; but I hope I am guiltless of the infernal charge, though a close prisoner in a dreary dungeon in MORPETH GAOL. Of what continuance my confinement will be, the progress of Time can alone determine.

I HAD not so perfect a knowledge of the inveterate malice and unrelenting revenge of my spiteful rival as Olivia. Her fears were presaging ; and what she presaged, Mr. Fennell's vengeance is now attempting to penetrate. Though perfectly acquiescent to the just decisions of the laws of my country,

try, I will not tamely submit myself to be kept a prisoner in a dungeon on a supposititious accusation, however powerful my accuser may be in the county, however authoritative his connections. No report even has yet been circulated of Fennell's death, and if the event had happened, rumour would have busily proclaimed it. If my present confinement be the contrivance of malice, it shall not long escape detection.

BUT I shall now proceed to acquaint you with the particular circumstances of my present situation. Under a surmise that Mr. Longford had departed from Bertram-Hall, I walked thither in the forenoon, and, prevailing upon my dear Olivia to favour me with her company in the park, we sat down upon the verdant turf beneath the shade of our favourite sycamore.

"I AM surprised, Mr. Wilton," said Olivia, "that you have not heard from Mr. Benfield; he is certainly worse, or hath received some unfavourable intelligence relative to your sister, which he wishes to conceal from you at present, lest the information might irritate your sensibility, and protract the restoration of your health."

"I HOPE not, my dear; I rather conclude, he hath nothing of importance concerning my sister to acquaint me with, or I am confident I should, before this, have received the information. From a thorough knowledge of the activity of Mr. Benfield's mind, I dare aver that he is not at present idle, but hath attempted many deep-laid schemes for the recovery of his lost mistress."

"INDEED,

"INDEED, Mr. Wilton, I am very anxious to hear of the destiny of my suffering sister."

"YOUR suffering sister, my angel!"

"OH Sir, pardon the expression! it was a slip of inconsideration."

"No pardon, Olivia; she is—she shall be your sister. But when, oh when will that happy day arrive? say when shall this affinity take place?"

"SIR Robert and Lady Bertram," replied Olivia, "with their wonted benevolence towards me, have left this appointment to my own determination. Sir Robert hath informed me of every particular which passed betwixt you and him at your last interview. His goodness to me was ever tender, humane, and sympathetic; his bounty hath far exceeded my expectation."

"SINCE, my Olivia, you are in this case left to your own determination, would you wish to protract my misery? for miserable I must incessantly be, until I am united to you by the sacred bonds of God and man."

"BELIEVE me, Wilton, I have not the least wish to protract your misery; I have not a hope beyond the consummation of your happiness. But can you, my Wilton, be happy under the fatality of a father's curse; when a mother, amiable for her virtues, and respectable for her sufferings; when a sister, a beloved sister, is pining beneath the pangs of disappointment, and languishing under the gloomy horrors of a close confinement; yourself not recovered from your wounds, and the life
"or

“ or death of your opponent in a state of absolute
 “ uncertainty : under all these awful considerations,
 “ can you, my Wilton, be happy ?”

THIS recapitulation of true but terrific incidents
 aroused, in a moment, every feeling of my soul. I
 started from my grassy seat, and with a look of hor-
 ror—as Olivia afterwards told me—expressive of
 every internal anguish, exclaimed, “ Oh Olivia, you
 “ have harrowed up my very soul by an enumera-
 “ tion of pressing evils, which were dormant, and,
 “ from the predominancy of my ardent love for you,
 “ almost forgotten. Wretch that I am, whither
 “ shall I fly ! Where shall I hide myself from the
 “ searching eye of an all-seeing God, whose venge-
 “ ance pursues me as a disobedient outcast—
 “ hated, cursed by my father—my mother, by my
 “ ingratitude, involved in the bitterest misery !”
 Raising my hands and eyes to heaven, in the an-
 guish of my heart I uttered, “ Merciful Heaven !
 “ forgive and pardon an undutiful son, who, from a
 “ wish to pursue the path of rectitude, may have
 “ erred, and by his error hath fatally, though not
 “ intentionally, involved the innocence of others in
 “ the guilt of his own crimes !”

“ WILTON, Wilton !”———

I STARTED from my reverie ; and perceived that
 Olivia, with a look of sweetness and complacency,
 was resting her head upon my shoulder. My horror
 was dispelled in a moment ; LOVE, all powerful LOVE,
 revived ; and, in a fit of ecstasy, I clasped the charm-
 ing creature to my panting bosom, and exclaimed,
 “ Now, Olivia, I am happy !”

“ OH Wilton, forgive my officiousness ; I mean
 “ not

"not to wring your feelings by any imputation of
"ingratitude."

"You have not offended me; and therefore ask
"not forgiveness."

"Oh yes, I excited unpleasant ideas in your mind.
"Yet, believe me, my happiness is involved in
"your's."

So saying, she covered her blushes in my bosom.
Silence ensued.---The scene, Benfield, was tender.---
To attempt a description of my own feelings, and I
believe they were reciprocal, would be inconsiderate,
would be absurd.

AFTER a certain pause, this still pleasing rapture
began to subside; and, looking around, I espied two
men coming towards us. We walked forwards. They
came to us, when one of them said, "Pray, Sir, is
"your name Wilton?"

I ANSWERED in the affirmative. He instantly
clapped his hand upon my shoulder, and said, "I
"arrest you in the King's name; you are my pri-
"soner."

"INFORM me for what crime I am arrested."

"FOR MURDER, Sir! You are arrested for the
"wilful murder of John Fennell, Esq. as worthy a
"gentleman as any in the county."

"PRAY, Mr. Constable, let me see the war-
"rant by which you are authorized to apprehend
"me."

"COME,

"COME, Sir, come along," said the fellow,
 "you shall see my authority when you come be-
 fore his honour the Justice, Sir Andrew Johnson,
 the uncle of Mr. Fennell."

"Excuse me, Mr. Constable, without you im-
 mediately produce your warrant, I will not obey
 your authority."

"WILL you not? then you must be forced to
 obey!" At the same instant they both seized me
 by the collar.

OLIVIA, sweet creature, who all the while had
 been in the most violent tremor, screamed out and
 fainted in my arms. I civilly requested them to
 stand aloof until the lady was recovered, and I would
 attend them without reluctance.

"No, no, Sir, the lady is only in a fainting fit;
 she will come to herself presently. We will never
 leave hold until we have you before Sir Andrew."

My attention was wholly employed over the dear
 object of all my hopes, while the unfeeling savages
 beheld her agony without the least emotion.

SHE looked up; but seeing they were still holding
 me, she relapsed into her former insensibility. I ad-
 jured them to keep at a little distance, promising not
 to make the least attempt to leave them; but they
 were callous to all my entreaties. Fortunately, how-
 ever, Sir Robert and Lady Bertram came into the
 park, and perceiving my embarrassed situation, the
 former ran towards us, and enquired with much ve-
 hement what was the matter.

ANSWERED, "I am arrested for the MURDER of Mr. Fennell."

"WHERE is your warrant, Constable?" said Sir Robert.

"I HAVE demanded it, Sir," said I, "but they refuse to produce it."

"REFUSE to produce it!" replied Sir Robert; "Villains, stand off;" at the same time knocking one of them down with the thick end of his cane.— "Where is your warrant?" said he to the other.

"My partner has it in his pocket, Sir."

OLIVIA, at my earnest desire, walked off faint and trembling, hanging upon the arm of Lady Bertram.

THE doughty Constable began to rise, and while sitting on his breech, he searched his pockets for the warrant; which as soon as he found, he jumped up with alacrity, and said, "There, Sir, there it is."

SIR Robert took it, and, having examined it, said, "Mr. Wilton, it is a legal warrant, and you must obey."

"I NEVER meant to resist, Sir Robert."

"I WILL accompany you, Mr. Wilton, to Sir Andrew Johnson's."

THE carriage was ready in a few minutes, and to accommodate Mr. Constable, he was permitted to mount behind. Sir Andrew Johnson lives at the distance of about seven or eight miles only from Bertram—

tram-Hall ; and on our arrival being announced, we were, with all the pomp of Magistracy, ordered into his presence. As soon as he beheld Sir Robert, I perceived his countenance to change, and his authority sat very awkwardly upon him.

“ I SUPPOSE, Sir Robert, this is the gentleman who has murdered my nephew ! ”

“ I AM sorry, Sir Andrew, that you should give it so harsh a name : Mr. Wilton was challenged by your nephew ; and if, in defence of his honour, he was victorious, it is not just to brand him with so opprobrious an accusation.”

“ No matter, no matter, Sir Robert, who gave the challenge, murder is committed, and I must commit the murderer to MORPETH GAOL.”

“ SIR Andrew,” said I, “ since I am thus unfortunate, I shall calmly await the equitable decision of the law ; but pray, when did your nephew die ? ” — The interrogation startled him, and he made no answer. He sat down at a table, where there were pens, paper, and ink, and began to write.

“ WHEN he arose, he said, “ Here, Constable, is the gentleman’s commitment ; take especial care that he be lodged a close prisoner.”

“ YES, your honour Sir Andrew.”

“ SIR, what day did Mr. Fennell die ? ”

“ AH ! ” shaking his head — “ I have lost the heir to my estate, Sir Robert ; as worthy a gentleman —

“tleman as any between TRENT and TWEED.
 “Four thousand pounds a-year would have made
 “any man loth to die, and leave all behind him.
 “Sir Robert, I have been these twenty-nine years
 “three quarters and thirteen days in the commif-
 “fion, and I never before committed a man for MUR-
 “DER. Thus to be compelled to prosecute the mur-
 “derer of my nephew and heir, is not a little hard.”

“PRAY, Sir Andrew, when do you purpose to
 “inter Mr. Fennell?”

HERE Sir Andrew, ringing the bell, cried,
 “Ralph, bring a bottle of wine! the gentlemen
 “have had a long journey. I have better wine, Sir,”
 addressing himself to me, “than any you will get in
 “Morpeth Gaol.”

THE bottle of wine was brought in; but all our
 interrogatories relative to the death of Mr. Fennell
 were evaded, or intentionally not heard; which
 caused me shrewdly to suspect the whole of the tran-
 saction to be an imposture. This had not escaped the
 penetration of Sir Robert, who became impatient to
 be gone; and taking leave of Sir Andrew, the Con-
 stable, as before, being posted behind the carriage,
 we drove away.

SIR Robert observed, that as we had been able to
 obtain nothing but evasive and equivocating answers
 from this profound Justice, and as Mr. Fennell's house
 was only two miles out of our direct road, he would
 drive round, and endeavour, from the surprize of
 our unexpected visit, to dive, if possible, into the
 mystery which seemed to envelope this affair.

THE Constable remonstrated.

SIR

SIR Robert answered, that he would be surety for the prisoner. We accordingly drove to Mr. Fennell's house; and when the carriage stopped at the gate, Sir Robert alighted, and enquired for Mr. Fennell.

THE servant answered, without hesitation, that Mr. Fennell was dead; but from the apparent bustle, and perceiving that all the servants avoided his presence. Sir Robert observed, "that this mysterious conduct" was not easily to be developed at present;" and he advised me to a tacit acquiescence, as a little time would unravel this intricate business. We accordingly drove directly forward for Morpeth, where I was delivered into the custody of the gaoler, who immediately confined me in durance.

THUS, Benfield, you know every particular of this very extraordinary transaction; how it will terminate is beyond my capacity to prognosticate.

L E T T E R XLVIII.
FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

THE tide in your affairs has taken a very unfortunate turn. The death of Mr. Fennell, should it prove true; will scarcely convict you on an equitable interpretation of the law: should it be all a contrivance fabricated for some sinister purpose, I think it might easily be discovered; and then an action for false imprisonment will teach his relations, in future, not to abuse their authority.

POWER and riches, when possessed by the ignorant and ambitious, are frequently the instruments of tyranny. Proud to be arrayed in authority, to strut in despotism, they usher forth their magisterial commands to humble slaves and cringing vassals who dare not disobey, and stretch their power far beyond that boundary which the established laws of our country have prescribed. Should the fact prove as Sir Robert and you seem to suspect, I make you a free and unlimited proffer of my estate and fortune to right yourself, and exact that justice which power and authority seem to deny.

THE predicament in which you are placed, will, I am persuaded, urge you to investigate, with unremitting assiduity, every circumstance which may seem in the smallest degree likely to develope what your enemies are so desirous to conceal. You owe it to your family, to your character, to posterity. Let no exertion be wanting, let no fear be predominant, and perseverance will facilitate, will overturn every difficulty. But to whom am I writing? To one who will smile at my passion, and view my impetuosity with all the apathy of a Stoic. Wilton, forgive my violence; for when I presume to advise, you know it results from the warmth of a friendship sincere and uncontaminated.

I HAVE done an action, of which in all probability you will not approve. I have conveyed your last letter to your venerable mother; for I deemed it indispensably requisite that your family should be apprized of your present critical situation. To be accused and confined, may give you immediate pain; but should interest or interposition be finally necessary, the sooner preparation is made the more prevalent it will certainly be.

THE kind enquiry of Olivia after my Antonet affords me the highest pleasure. If I had received any satisfactory intelligence respecting the place of her retreat, I should immediately have communicated it to you; but my enquiries have been fruitless, and I have not been able to obtain the least hint upon this subject.

HER maid Jenny, two days after she took up her residence with me, made a proposal, with which I immediately coincided; for although it seemed somewhat chimerical, yet I thought it might by possibility produce some information from whence a project might be formed to liberate her from her present confinement, and restore her once more to my arms.

IMPRESSED with the idea that Antonet was in London, among some of her relations, Jenny, who from her long servitude in the Wilton family was perfectly acquainted with them all, proposed to visit the metropolis, and try not only to discover where she was, but to assist in her elopement.

TO the eye of love, every scheme which is calculated to promote its success, appears plausible and effective; and instantly furnishing my ambassadress with the necessary credentials, I dispatched her to the metropolis, with full powers to accomplish, if possible, the object of her mission. I have had two letters from her since her arrival in London, in which she acquaints me; she has been hitherto unsuccessful, although she has visited every family whom she could recollect to be in any degree of affinity with your's; and I am therefore in hourly expectation of her return. If she bring me no intelligence, my hopes for the present must vanish, and I shall become a victim to despair.

My wound is in a healing condition ; so that with some pain and more difficulty I am able again to handle my pen ; but if Jenny prove unsuccessful in her embassy, and arrive to-day, I may probably be in Morpeth before you receive this epistle, as I am determined not only to visit, but liberate, if possible, my friend from the dreary cells of a noisome prison. If I come not in a day or two after the receipt of this, you may conclude that I have received information which indispensably requires my immediate attendance elsewhere.

P. S. THE inclosed from Mr. Bowman will convince you, that Lord Wilton has not relinquished his intentions relative to the sale of his estate, although he meets with more opposition than he expected from the established law of the land.

FROM MR. BOWMAN TO MR. BENFIELD.

SIR,

CONCEIVING myself bound by my promise to acquaint you with every particular incident relative to cutting off the entail of the Wilton estate, I now inform you that I have had another visit from the Earl at my chambers. He told me he had written to his son and requested his consent, for which he was to receive the gratuity of ten thousand pounds, on an absolute resignation of all claim to the estate ; but that he had received an answer which contained a peremptory refusal. Discoursing for some time upon this subject, he at length grew impatient and almost ungovernable in his temper, saying, that he was confident of the practicability of his project ; and tho' some small legal difficulty might intervene, a little ingenuity and some consideration might easily remove

it,

it, for which I should receive a liberal compensation of one thousand pounds.

I ANSWERED, "The compensation, my Lord, is liberal indeed, but then it is the reward of villainy, which I never yet have practised, even when Poverty was my companion, and Want my domestic. I am now independent; and will never fully the reputation I have acquired by being guilty of so base an action."

He looked sternly at me, muttering, "Independent!—Reputation!—and a Lawyer!"—without deigning a reply, he retired.

WHAT I would not perform I may be a little industrious to prevent.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MISS
OLIVIA BERTRAM.

MY DEAR OLIVIA,

A SEPARATION from the pleasure of your company is really a greater punishment than my confinement. The latter I could patiently endure, supported by the pleasing hope of a speedy termination, when my innocence shall be vindicated, and my honour justified from the least stain or aspersion; but to be separated from my Olivia is painful indeed, and infixes within my bosom a corroding sting, which gnaws with intolerable anguish, and embitters every moment of my existence. Grating reflection! to have you torn from my arms by the ruf-

hian grasp of power in that happy hour when your ingenuous confession of a mutual affection confirmed my aspiring hopes, and rendered me proud of the distinguished preference I have obtained, and which I fondly flattered myself would soon be established on the most permanent foundation.

OH Olivia, Olivia, how transient are our pleasures, how fleeting are all our hopes ! To be blessed with your love, to be honoured with your affection, was my sole, my chief desire. I received this blessing, I was distinguished with this honour; yet, by a perverse fatality, I am severely doomed to all the horrors of an uncertain separation.

CRAWEL man ! will thy revenge—this dark revenge—pursue me beyond the grave ? Had thy infernal malice attacked me before I was a lover—before I was beloved—thy vengeance had appeared to me trivial and despicable. But now, oh now, thou triumphest in my punishment, and harrowest up my soul with misery's keenest pang.

BUT, wretched as I am, why should I complain ? Have I forgot your confessed partiality ? No ; never shall that favour be obliterated from my mind, whilst my pulse beats, or memory retains its seat within my brain. This constitutes my happiness :—under this idea I will—I must be happy.

I WAS a stranger until now, Olivia, to the violence of my passion. Whilst I had free access to your presence it was calm, placid, and unruffled, like the smooth surface of the gentle stream unruffled by a breeze ; but now it is impetuous and ungovernable, like the furious dashing surge, when fomented by the raging tempest, and disturbed by the howling storm.

form. Cruel alternative ! Yet I will be silent ; conscious that there is a tide in the fortunes of every human creature, which if suffered negligently to flow on leads to ruin, but if vigorously opposed, and endured with pious resignation, although its first appearances were threatening, yet it operates favourably by methods which are secret, and finally conveys us into the harbour of peace.

THIS consideration; when maturely weighed, brings hope to my mind, encourages me to conduct myself, during this inundation of my happiness, with patient fortitude, and teaches me to subdue the conflicting passions of my breast ; but when I reflect, that from my unhappy fate one pang of wretchedness may assail your bosom, Olivia ! the reflection is intolerable—I am lost in the torment of my anguish. Let me conjure you, by our reciprocal affection—by that chaste passion which agitates our bosoms, to forget if possible, to bury in oblivion, every moment of my existence which I am compelled to pass in this loathsome confinement—rendered doubly loathsome, since separation from you is the baneful consequence.

WHAT I am at present advising you to perform, probably my unmanly complaints may render more irksome and afflictive, from the sole supposition that I am not only unhappy, but miserable. Yet, Olivia, believe me, the horrors of a dungeon are not insufferable, and a little patience may mitigate their dreariest gloom. When I say I feel, I feel not for myself : but when my bosom swells with sorrow, it swells for my Olivia. If perchance the tear of recollection steals adown my cheek, I wipe it not away ; but cherish it as the sweet tribute of gratitude that is due to your love. Yet think not of me—let me for

a season be totally lost to your remembrance, till the sunshine of joy gleam again upon our hopes.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that I passed last night rather uncomfortably: sleep would have been a welcome visitant to my wearied eyes; but it never deigned to shed its kind influence upon my heavy lids. The truss of straw which serves me for a bed is cold and comfortless; and though I frequently stretched my wearied limbs upon it, and endeavoured to suspend the sorrows of my mind in a temporary sleep, yet the inclement damps of a cold clay floor so benumbed my frame, as wholly to prevent me from tasting of its charms. Whenever a gentle slumber overspread and seemed to lull my tired senses into a sweet repose, I was suddenly disturbed by the shrill clanking of chains, and the more horrid sounds of oaths and imprecations, dreadfully profane, and sufficient to make wickedness more wicked.

“HEAVEN, all-merciful and good!” cried I, “look with an eye of pity on these poor wretches, who, totally lost to a sense of their own calamities, form a combination in their crimes, and struggle for pre-eminence in villainy. Instead of a lively poignant sorrow for a life of shameless criminality, instead of a deep repentance for unheard-of scenes of theft and cruelty, they are boasting of their proficiency in evil, and endeavouring to render more callous those feelings which never felt for the sins of mortality.”

In this mad assemblage of riot and uproar, my only resource, and certainly it was a comfortable one, was to address myself to the protection of a good Providence, and implore him to shed his benign influence into the hearts of those poor wretches, that they might,

might, in time, see into the error of their ways, repent, and live.

THUS was the first night of my imprisonment spent ---the former part of it under all the tormenting agonies of love---the latter part, in prayer for the alleviation of the wretched, the miserable, and the vile.

L E T T E R L.

FROM MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM TO THE HON.
MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

THE perusal of your letter hath afflicted me--- hath wrung my soul with agony, and fixed the pang of misery so deeply in my heart, that it will not easily be eradicated.

DAMP walls and a truss of straw are sorry companions for a mind ill at ease --they will never soothe that affliction which originates from innocence accused, nor assuage that pain which is engendered from oppressed virtue. O Wilton, were I present, it should be my constant endeavour to dispel the gloom of your darkened cell, to soften your bed of straw, and infuse sweet hope into your afflicted mind. You should rest your head upon my bosom, there repose your sorrows, and sleep away the weary hours of wretchedness and grief. I would carefully guard thy slumbers, watch thee through the solemn silence of the night, and, when the horrid clangor of chains, or the more horrid sounds of wickedness, was likely to disturb thy rest, I would attempt to appease the offensive clamour,

and bid the offenders be at peace. When weary and fatigued, I would stretch myself by thee on the cold straw ; and, fearless of the dungeon's damps, recommend myself to the protection of my Creator, and sleep by thy side.

You conjure me to endeavour to assume a temporary forgetfulness, and erase from my remembrance your present affliction. No, Wilton ; I should then prove myself unworthy of that affection, unworthy of that love, for which you are now a prisoner. Was it not unkind in you to make the proposal ? or, Did you conclude me so irresolute and void of fortitude as to be unable to support the pressure of misfortune ? You know that a participation of sorrow contributes in a certain degree to its alleviation ; then who is so proper to participate your sorrows as she who has caused them ? This proposal is not a little unkind, or you deem me an unworthy companion in your afflictions. You are not afflicted alone, I assure you ; for these trembling fingers are now scarcely able to grasp the pen. My pillow, Wilton, has not been dry since our separation, and this is the first time that I have raised my aching head from it. I am indeed apprehensive that some fatal disorder has seized my frame, and my fears are seconded by those of Lady Bertram. But my gratitude, nay something more tender, my love impelled me to answer your letter ; and whatever I may suffer, whatever destiny awaits me, I could bear it with patience and resignation, were I but assured of your liberation. Yet, why should I despair ? I am confident of your innocence ; and though the God of our fathers may permit virtue to suffer for a season, yet, in vindication of his Providence, he will not finally allow the votaries of wickedness to triumph.

It is one of the chief duties of Christianity to inculcate patience under all our earthly trials; and herein consists the most shining characteristics of virtue. To be seduced by temptation, is a certain proof of a want of fortitude; for virtue is only eminently distinguishable, when set in opposition to the fascinating lures of vice.

To pass through life smooth and unruffled, with the passions lulled into indolence and inactivity, is little superior to a state of inanimation; but when a man is beset with trouble, oppressed with calamity, and surrounded with misfortune, by the machinations of evil-doers; and when by a virtuous exertion and strenuous efforts he attempts to repel every attack, and manfully bear up against the impending pressure; it would be arraigning the justice of our Omniscient Creator to suppose, that such struggles of virtue would not be victorious. He hath promised in his Eternal Word never to forsake the righteous; and though he permits them, for a trial of their constancy, to feel the corrective rod of adversity, he will at length exalt his suffering servants to a pre-eminence, even in this mortal state, that may be desired, nay envied, but is never attainable by the adherents of vice.

THIS everlasting truth, Wilton, duly impressed upon our minds, will enable us to bear the heaviest stroke of adversity with constancy and resignation. Let us recollect that the Great Pattern of Humility, the Chief Example of all Innocence, was persecuted, despised, and treated with ignominy. Let his patience be our precedent, let his example be our instruction. Thus armed with a faint imitation of our Christian Master, every misfortune, every evil that can assail us in our passage through this vale of tears, will be deemed trivial in comparison of our reward hereafter.

I AM not moralizing, Wilton; I am delivering those eternal truths which a studious perusal of REVELATION hath inculcated, and which are peculiarly congenial to the present disposition of my mind. I am conscious of increasing weakness; and the many pauses which I am necessitated to make, convince me of the rapid progress of some disorder which is undermining my mortal frame. I have long been the Child of Misfortune---you have heard me express it---though not a victim to despair; but this last concussion hath almost overpowered me. I am happy however, that upon the maturest reflection I have little to reproach myself with; yet as absolute perfection is not the lot of frail humanity, I may have many errors, many crimes of which I am not at present sensible.

YOUTH, Wilton, hath many desires, which a short taste of life tends rather to multiply than to decrease. Few are possessed of that self-denial, wholly to divest themselves of these desires; for life hath many snares, which are entangling even to the wisest of the sons of men. Once I was indifferent---yes, Wilton, once I was indifferent to every surrounding pleasure---I knew not the weakness of my own heart; and why life is become so precious, you will not be at a loss to divine.

LETTER LI.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

THE time having elapsed in which you promised to be at Morpeth, I conclude that some incident of importance in which the happiness of my dear

dear sister Antonet is immediately concerned, hath prevented you from performing it.

WERE I the only unhappy sufferer in our family, I could bear my calamity without much regret; for I should perhaps consider it as punishment for that delinquency which I sometimes think attends on every species of filial disobedience. But every crime ought to have a penalty annexed to it, in proportion to its degree of guilt; and although I do not mean to say that my own punishment is undeservedly severe, yet I feel that it is highly aggravated by the reflection, that I have been indirectly instrumental in accumulating sorrow upon the undeserving head of my amiable mother. This consideration creates compunctions of remorse, embitters every moment of my existence, and renders my mind gloomy, my thoughts disgustful: for however I may be the unhappy tho' involuntary instrument of entailing misery upon others, whose friendship I esteem, and whose confidence I revere, I am not endowed with that insensibility as to perceive them involved in wretchedness from their generous attachment, and not participate of their affliction by consolatory endearments and an affectionate condolence.

FROM this sympathetic source my present misery is encreased; for the object of all my hopes is at this moment on the point of becoming the victim of a cruel disease. Tormenting thought! Oh Benfield, Olivia is sinking beneath the insidious advances of a destructive fever. Her constitution is too delicate to sustain the rude shocks which she has of late been destined to undergo. In this extremity of wretchedness, what an irreparable loss have I suffered by the premature death of the good Mr. Brooke! How would he have consoled me! how should I have profited by his admonitions!—

admonitions !—Death, terrific name ! cease thy devastation—let Olivia survive, though I fall thy victim ! If she be thy destined prey, and must now pay the great debt of nature, what is there worthy in life for my continuance in it !—Rash exclamation !—Benevolent Creator, forgive and pardon the presumption of an inconsiderate mortal---who is too ready to condemn what he does not understand, to arraign what is far above his comprehension.

SIR ROBERT has not left my cell above an hour :--- his friendship is permanent and solid---his activity to detect the imposture, if there be any in this circumstance, is unceasing.

YESTERDAY he waited upon Sir Andrew Johnson, the uncle of Mr. Fennell, and after informing him that he had well-grounded suspicions for concluding, that it was the arm of power and not of justice which had been the chief cause of my confinement, desired him seriously to reflect upon what he had done ; to consider in time of the impolicy of an action which might be productive of future litigation ; “ for,” continued he, “ should the imprisonment be false, ten thousand pounds will not purchase your acquittal.”

SIR Andrew seemed very much confused by this spirited declaration, and answered with hesitation, “ If I have stretched the just authority of law, it was not intentionally ; for I assure you, I have not been at Fennell-Hall since I received the doleful information of my nephew’s death. I gave him my solemn promise, that if he should die, I would prosecute his murderer ; and this promise, Sir Robert, I conceive myself bound to perform.”

“ A PROMISE, Sir Andrew, to a dying man ought certainly to be sacredly observed ; but, for your
“ own

“ own safety and the dispersion of my suspicions, will
 “ you favour me with your company to Fennell-Hall,
 “ where ocular demonstration will be decisive and
 “ satisfactory ?”

“ OH Sir Robert, you impose a hard task ! To
 “ behold the pale face of my deceased nephew will
 “ bedew my aged cheeks with sorrow. But since
 “ your scruples ought to be satisfied, I will willingly
 “ accompany you.”

SIR Robert said, that when they arrived at Fennell-Hall, they were received by a servant in deep mourning, who was the only person they saw during their stay. A solemn silence reigned throughout the mansion.

“ WHERE,” said Sir Andrew, “ lie the remains
 “ of my dear nephew ?”

THE servant immediately conducted them into a spacious apartment; in the middle of which was placed a coffin covered with a large velvet pall.

“ THERE, there, Sir Robert, (exclaimed Sir
 “ Andrew) lies the corpse of one of the best of
 “ men ! the hope of his family, the heir of my
 “ estate ! Had you only consented to have given him
 “ your daughter, you would have made an old man
 “ happy, and him, by the addition of your large
 “ estate, one of the richest gentlemen in the county
 “ of Northumberland. Oh, oh, Sir Robert, what
 “ evils are come upon me in my old age ! My
 “ gray hairs will sink in sorrow to the grave.”

“ BE not inconsolable, Sir Andrew. Misfortune
 “ is grievous indeed, when it deprives a worthy fa-
 “ mily

“mily of its only hope and heir; but it is not intolerable, and ought to be borne with a due resignation, and considered as one among the many common accidents of life. Beside, it ought to be remembered, that your nephew was the aggressor; that he was fully compelled Mr. Wilton to meet him in defence of his honour; and since it was his unfortunate lot to fall, he fell by the man whose life he unrelentingly sought.”

“OH Sir Robert, do not asperse the character of the deceased. Could that lifeless corpse rise up and speak, it would say, he never wronged or did an injury to a fellow-creature. He was all gentleness and innocence, and would have made a kind husband.”

SIR ANDREW was extremely talkative in his grief, and ample in his praises of the deceased. Sir Robert's doubts however were by this visit removed; and he took his leave, expressing his sorrow for such an unfortunate mischance.

I MENTIONED in the former part of my letter, that my dear Olivia was dangerously ill:--the inclosed are a few lines which I sent to her; when I received the report from my gaoler that Mr. Fennell was dead; the perusal of which, Sir Robert says, had so sudden an effect upon her health and spirits, that in the space of a few minutes she became feverish, with strong symptoms of delirium. The fever increased; and when Sir Robert left Bertram-Hall, she was pronounced by her physician to be in the utmost danger.

POOR OLIVIA! why in such haste! Should thy chaste soul break loose from its earthly precincts, I would instantly solicit the bloody hand of the executioner to set

set my ardent spirit free, to meet and ask of thine forgiveness in the pure regions of the air, before it entered into the mansions of everlasting bliss and immortality.

OH BENFELD, pity me, pity me ! I am wretched beyond redemption—sunk into the lowest gulph of misery, without a possibility of an escape ! What is philosophy ! It is a phantom. What are those philosophic but delusive theories with which we have so often delighted our minds, vainly supposing them to form a tower of strength impregnable to the attacks of grief or the storms of misery ! They are, alas ! mere gilded bubbles, which burst with the passing breeze. I have only one resource ; and that alone is all-sufficient. This is my RELIGION—a pure confidence in the doctrines of Revelation. Here the “weary may be at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling.” Here is my hope---here is the anchor of my drooping soul.

TO MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM.

MY DEAR OLIVIA,

THE die is cast—Mr. Fennell is dead, and I am already arraigned at the dreadful tribunal of my own conscience. This internal monitor warns me of my approaching fate on earth, and points out incessantly the horrors of an Hereafter. I need no other judge---I am already self-condemned ; and feel not a wish for existence, but what originates from yourself. I have been, though involuntarily, the unhappy instrument of causing you much grief. Forgive, forget me ;---and if in after-times recollection should excite a tear, suppress it not ; it will be a grateful tribute to the memory of a man who once dearly loved you.

LETTER LII.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR SIR,

BY the perusal of my last you would perceive that I was in an absolute state of despondency. This horror arose in my mind, not from any abject fear of a premature death, but solely from the reflection of being the reputed murderer of a gentleman, whose violence would have deprived me of that life which I enjoyed by a tenure that is not at my own disposal. The consideration, that I only acted in my own defence, is no palliative for the wilful transgression of the positive commands of my Maker, and the established laws of my country. It is true, that I was the person challenged; but then it was totally optional, whether or not I accepted of this challenge; therefore, my spontaneous acceptance renders me as culpable, in the scale of impartial, distributive justice, as he with whom the challenge originated. If I had been violently assaulted, and, in the defence of my own personal safety, had deprived a fellow-creature of his existence, rather than suffer him tamely to rob me of mine, I should, in the eyes of dispassionate reason, have been deemed guiltless; but unfortunately this was not my case. I had a right to refuse the invitation of vindictive malice; and might have retracted my too hasty consent to meet my challenger; but instead of doing either, I rushed inconsiderately and irreligiously into an act of fury, and wantonly despoiled the image of my Maker. Thus self-condemned, how can I ask for mercy at the great tribunal of eternal justice; how can I expect to elude the vengeance of the violated laws of my country; or how can I hope, even in any event, to silence the piercing voice of conscience, which thus condemns me? The plea of custom will not, I fear, be admitted among

among the fair records of truth and justice; for custom cannot sanctify a wrong, make VICE to be a VIRTUE, or hide the dire offence of MURDER under the thin and specious veil of HONOUR. Delusive, empty name! Man adopts thee only as a specious pleader, to varnish over the irregularity of his conduct.

WHILST my mind was absorbed in contemplating the folly of mankind, who attempt to gild the most criminal enormities which can possibly be committed with the plausible epithet of HONOUR, the gaoler entered, and told me that a lady who was attending without wished to speak to me.

"A LADY!"---

"Yes, Sir."

SUSPECTING it to be Lady Bertram, I replied, "Desire her to walk in."

THE few rays of light which faintly glimmered through the iron grate of my dungeon not being sufficient for me to write by, I had been accommodated with a candle, which stood upon a little fir table, at which I was sitting, with my head resting upon my hand, when the lady entered.---I arose to receive her---she flew into my arms, exclaiming, "Alas, my son!"

MERCIFUL God! Benfield, it was my venerable mother.

THE surrounding darkness happily prevented me from observing the violent agitations of maternal sensibility. I held my beloved parent in my arms---her aged cheek was laid upon my bosom, which I plentifully bedewed with the tears of true filial affection. She continued for several minutes insensible and inanimate.

THE

THE gaoler perceiving our affliction, came forward and said, "If it be agreeable to you, Sir, to walk above, my parlour is at the service of the lady and you."

"THANKS, good man."

HIS wife immediately attended, and by her assistance my dear mother was conveyed into the open air, whose cooling freshness recalled her flitting spirit.

As soon as she beheld me, again she flew into my arms, and clung around my neck.—Her agony was relieved by a flood of tears; and so mutual was our affliction, that the gaoler and his wife, though mere spectators, and daily accustomed to behold the deepest misery, wept at the tender scene.

AFTER a pause of some minutes, she raised her weeping eyes, looked upon me with love, with affection, and pressed me to her panting bosom.

HER embrace called forth every feeling of my soul: duty, gratitude, and filial tenderness operated so forcibly in my mind, that had not my tears given a vent to the workings of my sorrow, I must have sunk beneath the violence of the conflict.

"HENRY, my son, I came to administer consolation, not to afflict your wounded soul."

"ALAS, Madam, how shall I repay this last act of your affection! From my cradle I have experienced your tenderness; in my riper years I have pierced you through with many sorrows. But forgive your unfortunate son! I have been the unwilling cause of many a miserable hour to the best of parents."

"Ah"

"Ask not my forgiveness, Henry, I came not to reproach you—I came to lighten the gloom of your confinement, to minister personally to your wants; to soothe, if it be possible, the cumbrous troubles of your heart."

"Oh my parent! to attend upon a poor, forlorn, degenerate outcast! to experience the sullen gloom of a dungeon, the damp moisture of a darkened cell, the horrid clangor of trailing chains, are sorry and unmeet companions for your tenderness and delicacy."

"HENRY, name them not. I left Wilton-Park to perform the office of a parent, and think not by a representation of the horrors of a gaol to scare me from my intention. I will attend upon thee."

"CAN you, my dear mother, oh can you stretch yourself upon a bed of straw, and sigh away the terrors of the night until the pale rays of morning glimmer through the iron grates, and shew the glad approach of day?"

"A TRUSS of straw! Alas, my child, I hope that is not thy nightly bed!"

"Too true, indeed."

"HARD has been thy lot; but if interest or wealth can procure better accommodations, they shall be provided this day."

"PRAY, Madam, is my honoured father still inflexible? Does he refuse to see a penitent son under such circumstances of sorrow?"

"He

“ HE is not apprized, Henry, of your misfortune.
“ Under the idea of your being sick of a fever, I
“ obtained his permission to visit you.

“ WILL nothing appease his wrath? Will nothing atone for one act of disobedience? Alas, what
“ am I saying? or why should I complain? My life
“ is not in my own possession; my time may be
“ shorter than at present I imagine!”

“ HENRY, HENRY, reflect. The circumstances
“ of adversity should be combated with resolution,
“ and endured with a becoming patience. The noble mind will not sink beneath the severest trials, nor
“ despond whilst there is the smallest hope. You
“ were not the aggressor; and I trust the laws of
“ your country will, under the circumstances by
“ which you were induced to defend your honour and
“ your life, make proper allowances for the frailties
“ of human nature.”

“ MY kind directress through every stage of
“ time, I have deliberately weighed every argument
“ which partiality can adduce on this head.”

SIR ROBERT BERTRAM entered. I introduced my venerable parent to him. Their meeting was tender and affectionate. Sir Robert, upon my observing that he was booted, frankly told me, that he had again waited upon Sir Andrew Johnson upon a very important subject, and for which he a thousand times begged my pardon for having before omitted. “The
“ hurry and confusion into which, Mr. Wilton, so
“ unexpected and precipitate an action had thrown
“ me, made me entirely forget to offer bail. It was
“ suggested last night by Lady Bertram. I rode
“ early this morning to Sir Andrew Johnson’s house,
“ and

“and offered ten thousand pounds bail, which was positively refused.”

“THAT was something tyrannical, Sir Robert,” answered Lady Wilton; “but can my son have no better accommodation than a dreary cell and a truss of straw?”

SIR ROBERT looked amazed. “Has such been your lodging?”

“Yes, and without a murmur.”

“HEAVEN forgive me! how I have neglected my friend!”

THE gaoler was called in and interrogated, if he could accommodate me with a room that was properly furnished. He answered, “he could, under certain restrictions, for an escape might be very detrimental to him.”

SIR ROBERT offered him any indemnification, and the agreement was instantly concluded.

“LADY WILTON,” said Sir Robert, “you will do me the honour of making Bertram-Hall your home during your continuance in the North.”

“PARDON me, Sir Robert, here is my home: I came here to attend my son, and I must therefore request that you will not endeavour to drag me from him.”

I ENTREATED my dear mother to accept of Sir Robert's invitation. Sir Robert also endeavoured to persuade her not to risque her health, by exposing herself

herself to the noise, inconvenience, and dampness of a prison; but my kind parent was inflexible. May Heaven shower its choicest blessings on her head!

LETTER LIII.

FROM MR. BENFIELD TO THE HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

YOUR supposition of my having some affair of consequence upon my hands was well founded; but such a wild-goose chase have I been pursuing, as is more than sufficient to cool the most ardent flame of the most passionate lover.

My plenipotentiary arrived from London with the agreeable news of having discovered my fair exile, which again revived my hopes, and perched me upon the tip-toe of expectation.

THE very day before Jenny had determined to quit her fruitless search in the metropolis, she recollected, as she was walking along Pall-Mall, that a certain old maiden aunt of Lord Wilton lived in that street; and conceiving that Antonett might possibly be detained there, she determined, as a parting effort, to introduce herself upon some specious pretence into the house. Having never been but once at Mrs. Manby's with Lord Wilton's family, she concluded the old lady would not recollect her. She accordingly rapped at the door, and enquired for Mrs. Manby, saying, she wanted to speak with her. Mrs. Manby being old and infirm, and not able to leave her room, Jenny was shewn into the apartment where she was sitting. But what was her surprize,

as

as she walked up stairs, when she heard her young lady reading aloud to her aunt.

ANTONET, on her entering the room, turned pale—looked much confused—shut the book, and walked to the window.

My arch ambassadress, without taking the least notice of her lady, said, “Madam, as you have advertised for a young woman to be a companion, and to wait upon you, I have taken the liberty to call, and offer myself to your service.”

MRS. MANBY, peering at her through her spectacles, answered, “Young woman, you are under a mistake, I have not advertised, nor ever did in my life. I have got a companion here, my niece, who I believe will stay with me some time.”

ANTONET, on hearing this observation, turned round, and smiled, unobserved by the old gentlewoman, at Jenny, who, having obtained all the intelligence she desired, wished to decamp. Begging pardon for her mistake, she dropped a curtsy, and made toward the door; when Antonet, under the polite officiousness of shewing her through the passage, stepped before her, and Jenny slipped a letter, which I had given her, into her hand; and without a single whisper the room door was shut behind her.

EXULTING in her artifice, she came posting to inform me of her success. I set forward the next day towards London, hoping to obtain by stratagem the possession of what I had lost by violence.

WITHIN a few miles of Barnet I met a post-chaise driving with great rapidity from London; and in a

few seconds one of the footmen who rode behind it, came galloping up to my postillion and ordered him to stop. I let down the window, and enquired why he stopped my carriage; when a gentleman looking in at the carriage-door politely asked, if my name was not Benfield?

I TOLD him it was.

“ THEN, pray, Sir,” replied the gentleman, “ where is Miss Antonet Wilton ?”

ASTONISHED and confounded at the interrogation, I made no reply.

“ NAY, Sir,” said another gentleman, “ no hesitation ; we know she is in your custody.”

“ UPON my honour, gentlemen,” said I, “ you accuse me without a cause. If she were in my custody, why should I be travelling to London, whilst you are travelling to the North in pursuit of her ? How long hath she been absent ?”

“ SHE escaped last night; and being persuaded she had taken refuge with you, we were driving to Benfield-Hall in pursuit of her, when a servant of Lord Wilton’s recognized your carriage.”

“ THIS may convince you, gentlemen, that I am clear of the imputation; for if Miss Wilton had reached Benfield-Hall before my departure, you may depend upon it, that you would not have met me here.”

THIS assertion seemed to carry conviction with it; for one of the gentlemen observed, it was certainly altogether

altogether unnecessary to pursue farther, since Mr. Benfield, with whom they concluded Miss Wilton had taken up her asylum, was travelling to London.

“IT would certainly be folly,” said the other, “to proceed farther; we had better return to London with Mr. Benfield, and a little time will bring us information of our stray sheep.”

THIS proposal I could readily have dispensed with; but to prevent suspicion, I immediately acquiesced, and desired the gentlemen would do me the honour to accompany me in my carriage. This was frankly accepted; and their post-chaise was dismissed.

BEING seated and moving forward, I said smiling, “Pray, gentlemen, will you be so condescending as to inform me by what ingenious artifice Miss Wilton hath been enabled to escape the watchful eyes of her old maiden aunt?”—I had no sooner made the interrogation, than I was conscious of its impropriety; for my discovery that I knew the place of her confinement, might have excited their jealousy; however, it passed unobserved, and one of the gentlemen answered, “Miss Wilton retired to her chamber about an hour before her aunt. Mrs. Manby, walking up stairs, was hastily passed on the first landing by her footboy.---She undrest, and, preparing for rest, missed her niece: for they slept together. The alarm was immediately given, but to no effect—Miss Wilton was gone. The boy was summoned, and strictly interrogated what he was doing up stairs at so late an hour. He was amazed at the question, and proved most clearly, by his fellow-servants, that he was in bed above an hour before. Upon further examination, it was discovered that the cunning urchin had procured a

“suit of the boy’s clothes, in which equipping herself,
“she had eluded detection, and made her escape.
“Messengers were immediately dispatched to give
“us the intelligence. Unfortunately I was at the
“*Masquerade*, and my brother at *Drury-Lane* Thea-
“tre, by which we did not receive the information
“until this morning.”

“INDEED, gentlemen, I differ in opinion, for
“I think your absence from home was very fortu-
“nate; and I hope the fair fugitive, before this
“time, is far beyond your power. But pray, Sir,
“did you not meet her at the *Masquerade*? she was
“habited for it.”

“It is certainly, Mr. Benfield,” replied the
“younger, “your turn to triumph; for my cousin has,
“I fear, completely duped and disappointed us.”

“PRAY, Sir, have you the honour to be related
“to Miss Wilton?”

“YES, Sir, I have that honour.”

“WILL you favour me with your name, Sir?
“for I may one day have the pleasure to call you
“cousin.”

“You are jocular, Mr. Benfield. My name is
“MUSGRAVE, the sister’s son of Mrs. Manby.”

Thus we continued, in a friendly conversation dur-
ing the remainder of our journey; I in exulting at
the successful artifice of my Antonet—they in laugh-
ing at their disappointment, and their aunt’s ineffec-
tual fury.

THE carriage stopped at the inn; and, after a generous glass, we separated in mutual good will. I tarried no longer than to procure a little refreshment for myself and attendants; for engaging post-horses, I came to Benfield-Hall with more expedition than I went from it. I confess I was greatly mortified and disappointed in not finding my sweet fugitive upon my arrival, as I was almost confident she had fled thither.

DISTRACTED and confounded betwixt hope and despair, I am absolutely uncertain how to determine. I wish to stay a day or two lest she should arrive, as my absence might in such case be productive of fresh disappointments. I wish to be with you on many considerations.

WILTON, Wilton, I am lost and bewildered in an ocean of uncertainty! I shall wait two days with an impatience which you may conceive, but which it is impossible for me to describe. At all events, however, you may expect to see me in Morpeth before the expiration of five days.

THIS is a busy and unfortunate time, Wilton. How affairs will terminate, is wrapped in the inscrutable womb of futurity, whose mysteries we have no permission to penetrate. Of the wisdom of the decree it is impossible to doubt; but grumbling mortals are not satisfied with the finite knowledge which hides the ways of Heaven from their view.

L E T T E R L I V.

FROM THE HON. MR. WILTON TO MR. BENFIELD.

DEAR BENFIELD,

THE day before I received your last, I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of a very welcome visitant. Come hither with the utmost dispatch ; fly upon the wings of love ; for your scape-goat has taken shelter under my protection.

WHILE I was entertaining my ever-honoured parent with a recital of my passion for my charming Olivia, the proposal Sir Robert Bertram had made to me, and my determined resolution to marry her, should I be so fortunate as to meet with an honourable acquittal, Lady Bertram entered, leading in another lady. I arose to receive the ladies, and to enquire after the health of my suffering angel—when the other lady screamed out, “ My dear mother !” and flew into her arms.

THE embrace was mutually tender and affectionate. Disengaging herself from her parent’s arms, my lovely sister flung herself into mine, whilst her tears almost choaked her utterance. “ Oh brother, “ brother !” exclaimed she, “ this is a dreadful “ place for so joyful a meeting !”

“ WEEP not, my sister, misfortunes often come “ unmerited ; let us therefore bear them without re- “ pining. This meeting, sister, sheds a gleam of “ joy into my mind, since it convinces me that you are “ free from the pains of confinement and the dangers “ of

“ of tyranny. Dry up your tears, and let not your
“ sensibility embitter the first moments of our joy.”

“ I WILL endeavour to obey you, brother ; but
“ my dear Lady Bertram, I must chide you for this
“ surprize : why did you not inform me that my
“ mother was here ?”

“ I HUMBLY beg your pardon, Miss Wilton ; but
“ the hurry you were in to leave Bertram-Hall, and
“ the affliction which the weakness of my Olivia has
“ given me, were alone the occasion of this egre-
“ gious piece of forgetfulness.”

“ I WAS upon the point of enquiring for Olivia,
“ Lady Bertram, returned I, when I discovered my
“ sister : how is the health of my suffering angel ?”

LADY BERTRAM replied, “ The physician gives us
“ assurance, that the fever hath been at its height ;
“ the crisis, he says, was favourable, and he hopes for
“ a happy recovery.”

“ MY dear parent,” said I to my mother, “ con-
“ gratulate me ; this is a happy day.”

“ NOT this alone, my son, but many happy days ;
“ for I hope, you have yet many to enjoy in your
“ chequered passage through this vale of tears.---
“ Now, my child, my Antonet, if the recollection
“ of what you have undergone since you parted
“ from me at Wilton-Park will not be painful, let
“ me intreat you to favour us with the recital.”

“ WHATEVER pain, my dear mother, I should
“ suffer from the retrospect of some afflicting scenes,
“ my gratitude to the best of parents would induce

" me to a ready acquiescence with your wishes. How
 " my father discovered my intention to elope, and
 " the place of appointment, is altogether to me in-
 " comprehensible. I no sooner heard my father's
 " voice than I swooned, and of what passed after-
 " wards I have not the least recollection. When I first
 " came to myself, I was sitting in a carriage, in
 " company with my father, who, hearing my sighs,
 " though he could not see my tears, began to re-
 " proach me bitterly for my disobedience, protesting
 " he would shut me up in a nunnery the first opportu-
 " nity he had of procuring me a safe passage to
 " Italy. I made no reply to all his reproaches, and
 " he became silent; which silence continued the
 " greatest part of our journey. When we changed
 " horses, I was not suffered to leave the carriage;
 " and by travelling with great expedition through
 " the night, we arrived in London the next morn-
 " ing. The rumbling of the wheels upon the streets
 " awaked me from a state of torpidity, in which I
 " dozed for several hours. At length the carriage
 " stopped, and I perceived we were at my aunt
 " Manby's door. The old Lady was not come
 " down stairs; but when informed of our arrival, she
 " came in a few minutes.

" As soon as she entered, my father said, My dear
 " aunt, from a thorough conviction of your pru-
 " dence, I have to commit to your charge a
 " thoughtless runaway, a perverse daughter, whom
 " I detected last night in the very act of elopement
 " with a man who will bring disgrace upon our fa-
 " mily."

" O NEPHEW, nephew, you wring my soul with
 " the relation! What will this world come to! You
 " thoughtless minx, why are you so forward to be
 " married?

“ married? When I was of your age, if I saw a man
 “ pass by the window, the very sight covered me
 “ with blushes, and I hid my face with my apron:
 “ even now, at the age of eighty-one, I hate the
 “ sight of all the ugly creatures, and can scarcely
 “ endure my own male relations. Fye, fye, Antonet.
 “ Wilton!”

“ I ANSWERED with my tears, and kept a fullen
 “ silence.

“ AFTER many more sarcastic remarks upon the
 “ impudent chits of her own sex, my aunt said,
 “ You judged very right, very right, nephew, in
 “ bringing your inconsiderate daughter under my
 “ care; you may safely trust her to my guardianship;
 “ and if she elope from my watchfulness, I give you
 “ leave to conclude that I was privy to her disobe-
 “ dience.”

“ My father thanked her, and walked out to
 “ transact some business in the City.

“ FROM that moment I became a close prisoner,
 “ under the constant inspection of my suspicious old
 “ aunt. We sat in a back parlour; we slept, we
 “ arose together. I was absolutely denied the use
 “ of pen, ink, and paper, and not permitted to
 “ open any other book than the Bible or the Practice
 “ of Piety.

“ THUS passed my days, in one continued scene
 “ of dull uniformity; reproached for my forward-
 “ ness, reviled for my ingratitude, and admonished not
 “ to contaminate my family by any disgraceful con-
 “ nection. I bore all with patience, and never
 “ once attempted a vindication of my conduct, from

“ a firm persuasion it might possibly irritate, and
“ certainly would not appease her wrath.

“ At last, one day while I was reading to my aunt,
“ I saw to my utter astonishment my maid Jenny enter the room ! I trembled, although I was conscious that from her I had nothing to fear. Jenny seemed to take no notice of me ; but addressing herself to my aunt, who did not know her, said, that having seen an advertisement in the Papers for a woman servant, she was come to offer her services, being informed her ladyship was the advertiser. My aunt answered, she had been misinformed. The idea that some scheme for my release was in agitation immediately occurred to my mind ; and whilst Jenny was withdrawing, I stepped to the room-door, under the pretence of shewing her through the passage, when she gave me a letter. I seized the earliest opportunity of perusing it, and resolved on reading its contents to embrace the first opportunity to effect my escape. I accordingly retired to my chamber, folded my riding-dress into two small bundles, and stealing down stairs, secreted them in the front parlour, which joined the street-door. I then, with infinite trouble and precaution, procured a suit of livery-clothes belonging to my aunt’s footboy, which I concealed amongst the clothes of our own bed. Then coming down stairs, I carefully examined the lock of the street-door, and again I joined my aunt in the back parlour.

“ SUPPER being over, I begged leave to retire.
“ It was about ten o’clock at night, which was an hour sooner than our usual time of bed. I went up stairs, and with much deliberation dressed myself in the boy’s livery. Hearing my aunt upon
“ the

“ the stairs, I slipped out of the chamber, and
 “ with a palpitating heart walked down, under a
 “ hope that she would not observe me. I met her
 “ upon the landing-place, and drew aside. She, sup-
 “ posing I was the foot-boy, passed by me, without
 “ taking the least notice. I stepped into the front par-
 “ lour, took up my bundles, and, unlocking the
 “ street-door, recommended myself to the care of a
 “ gracious Providence, and sallied forth into the
 “ wide world.

“ I WALKED with all possible haste to the inn
 “ where the post-coaches set out for the North; re-
 “ solving, brother, to take refuge with you in your
 “ little hermitage. Upon enquiry, I found none
 “ would be ready for some hours. I therefore de-
 “ sired to be shewed into a private room; and send-
 “ ing for the mistress of the house, I asked her, if I
 “ could be accommodated immediately with a chaise
 “ and four for the North. The question made her
 “ eye me with much attention, and she looked so
 “ stedfastly in my face, that I felt the conscious
 “ blush of shame in an instant overspread it. Ob-
 “ serving my embarrassment, she stepped to the
 “ door and shut it, and on her return perceiving me
 “ ready to sink with fear and confusion—she bid me
 “ not be afraid; adding, If it be not presumptu-
 “ ous in me, I cannot help observing that your
 “ dress is very ill suited with your person. Over-
 “ whelmed at her observation, I threw myself into
 “ a chair:—she bid me take comfort—-I sighed,
 “ and believe I wept. I asked her again, more
 “ earnestly than before, if I could have a chaise. She
 “ answered, I might; but hoped that I would not
 “ travel in my present dress. I asked, Why? She
 “ replied, “ Because it will betray your sex;” and
 “ desired me to step to the glass, and observe those

“ signs by which she had been led to detect me.
 “ The disorder of my mind was so great, that I
 “ could not see any thing by which my sex could
 “ possibly be discovered.— No, replied she, Why
 “ are those pendants there?—’ Goodness, how have
 “ I been so blind!—In the hurry of adjusting my
 “ dress, I had actually forgot to take the small gold
 “ pendants from my ears which I frequently wore,
 “ and these were the tokens which had betrayed my
 “ sex to my kind hostess. I immediately removed
 “ them, and told her, that by her leave I would,
 “ while the chaise was getting ready, dress myself in
 “ a travelling habit: she withdrew to give or-
 “ ders; and when she returned to announce that it
 “ was at the door, I was properly equipped. She
 “ asked me if I would not take some refreshment; but
 “ as I could not take any thing, I made an excuse,
 “ and told her, I hoped in a short time to recompense
 “ her for her kindness and civility. She smiled, and
 “ asked, if I had not a companion to the North? I
 “ replied that I actually had not; that I had deter-
 “ mined to travel three hundred miles alone; for that
 “ I was not at present flying to the temple of Hy-
 “ men, but from the rod of tyranny.

“ I ENTERED the chaise, and told the drivers I was
 “ travelling to Carlisle. Thus I came post from
 “ stage to stage without any interruption, and with-
 “ out any sleep, except what I got in the chaise; and
 “ am happy to find myself here, though weary and
 “ fatigued.”

Thus, Benfield, I have given you her whole nar-
 rative. The prize is now in your own power, pro-
 vided you lose it not through indolence or delay.
 This circumstance seems to indicate that our affairs,
 though complicated and involved, are now spontane-
 ously

ously unravelling ; for what you could not atchieve with all your diligence and precaution, has fallen unexpectedly into your power. The prospect of happiness on your part has become brightened ; but mine, alas ! still continues in its original obscurity : I will not however add to my distress by these reflections, nor cast the gloom of despondency over my present moments ; rendered pleasing and agreeable by the company of my dear mother and sister. The vicissitudes that are perhaps secretly working in the womb of time, may in the event produce my enlargement, and restore my mind to its former tranquillity.

LADY BERTRAM being very solicitous for Lady Wilton to accompany her to Bertram-Hall to-night, she hath complied, from the desire of consoling her future daughter. May her consolation be restorative !

LETTER

LETTER LV.

FROM MR. BENFELD TO THE HON. MR. WILTON.

DEAR WILTON,

IMMEDIATELY upon the receipt of this letter quit your prison, and, if possible, come to me at Northallerton; and with you bring Sir Robert Bertram. I have caught the arch-traitor—Mr. Fennell is in my power, where I mean to keep him until you and Sir Robert arrive to identify his person. He denies most positively that he is John Fennell, Esq. of Fennell-Hall in Northumberland; but, from the weakness of his body, his infirm state of health, and the intelligence I received at the inn, I am confident he is the man.

As my carriage drove up to the door of the inn at Northallerton, I saw another standing at it, into which a gentleman was mounting by the assistance of his own servant and the landlord. After it had driven away, I enquired who the gentleman was.

“It is,” replied the landlord, “Mr. Fennell, of Fennell-Hall in Northumberland; he is going to the Continent for his health.”

“That is the gentleman whom I am travelling to Northumberland to call upon, on very important business: let me have the best horse in your stable immediately.”

“Oh Sir, I will send after him, if you will favour me with your name.”

“No,

"No, I must go myself."

THE horse was presently ready, and I ordered my servants to follow upon my own. I overtook the carriage a little to the south of the town, and then asking the servant behind to whom it belonged, he looked at me, hesitated, and then answered, it was his master's.

"WHAT is your master's name?"

"HE is in the carriage," replied the fellow.

I THEN rode up to the carriage-door, and addressing him said, "If I am not mistaken, Sir, your name is Fennell?"

HE answered, "What is that to you? What right do you claim to molest me upon the road?"

"THE right that every honest man claims to arrest a villain.—Driver, proceed at your peril."

THE carriage stopped—my servants came up. He ordered his servants to drive forward against all opposition. I ordered my coachman to turn the horses round, and lead them back to Northallerton. He began to grope in one of the pockets of the carriage. Suspecting his design, I presented a pistol in at the window, charging him to make no resistance, as my servants were all armed. He desisted---the carriage was turned about, and without the least ceremony I opened the door, stepped in, and seated myself by the side of him.

HE said, "You shall shortly repent of this, Sir."

THE only reply I made was, "Pray, Mr. Fennell, how does Mr. Wilton? Is he yet in Morpeth gaol?"

"gaol?" He started, trembled, and shrunk from my side, as if he had been stung by the deadly asp. He would not answer another syllable, until I had him a prisoner at the inn, where he positively denied having the least knowledge of Mr. Fennell, Mr. Wilton, or Sir Robert Bertram. The landlord is as positive in identifying his person.

Thus the business remains. For the more expedition, I send this by an especial messenger. You will perceive the necessity of dispatch.

CONCLU-

He said, "You shall shortly repent of this, Sir."

"The only reply I made was, 'Pity, Mr. Fennell, how does Mr. Wilton? Is he yet in Molesey gaol?'"

CONCLUSION.

WHEN Mr. Wilton received this letter, his mother, his sister, and his friend Sir Robert Bertram, were present. He no sooner perused it than he gave it to Sir Robert, and desired him to read it aloud, with which he immediately complied. The moment Lady Wilton heard the contents, she dropped upon her knees, and returned her thanks to the Almighty for his providential interposition in the detection of this horrid villainy. Arising, she first kissed her son and then her daughter, and said, "God bless you both, my children! I hope there are many years of happiness yet in store for you, the enjoyment of which will amply repay your patience and resignation. Let the gaoler be called."

THE gaoler came, and, being shewed the letter, hesitated how he should act in such circumstances.

"I WILL indemnify you at all events," said Sir Robert; "and if the gentleman at Northallerton be not Mr. Fennell, the prosecutor of Mr. Wilton, I promise, upon my honour, to return Mr. Wilton to-morrow safe into your custody."

"No, Sir Robert," said Lady Wilton, "I will become security for my son; here I will remain until he return."

"Oh mother," replied Miss Wilton, "let me have the pleasure of standing pledge for my brother. I will stay here, and do you go to Bertram-Hall."

"My

“My affectionate parent, my loving sister,” said Mr. Wilton, “you overwhelm me with your goodness”---the tear started in his eye---he turned aside and wiped it away.

IN this tender struggle of amiable affection the gaoler said, that he hoped the ladies would pardon him for refusing their offers; for he had so firm a reliance upon the honour of Sir Robert, that he would entirely confide in him for an indemnification. The whole company returned him thanks for his disinterested behaviour, and a chaise being ordered with all speed, the gentlemen took their leave and departed.

THE ladies being alone, Miss Wilton said, “My dear mother, you have seen Olivia, my brother’s intended bride; what is your opinion of the lady?”

“INDEED, Antonet, I have had little opportunity to form any conclusive opinion. During my stay at Bertram-Hall, though I was constantly in her chamber, she was so weak as never to be able to rise, and could only talk at intervals. She was prepared by Lady Bertram for my reception, lest the suddenness of my visit should occasion a relapse, which would have been more fatal than the original attack. When I approached her bedside, she held out her hand, took hold of mine, and tenderly kissed it:—the tear rolled down her lily cheek, and she turned her head from me. I consoled her, and bid her not be afflicted. She answered, ‘Oh Lady Wilton, can you forgive me for bringing so heavy, so severe a misfortune upon your family?’—‘My dear, you were the innocent cause, and need not to solicit my forgiveness.’”
“You

" You are all goodness, my dear Lady ; may you be
 " as happy as your amiability deserves !"—She was
 " very collected, and discoursed seriously and intel-
 " ligently on ~~the~~ unfortunate circumstances of your
 " brother's situation. She seemed to have a due
 " sense of the importance of religion upon her mind,
 " and said, she had seldom ceased to pray for the
 " welfare of my worthy son. There is a perfect
 " symmetry in her features ; her countenance is pla-
 " cid and serene ; and from what I can perceive, by
 " the remains of the cruel ravages of a violent fe-
 " ver, she must have been very beautiful. I have
 " not once attempted to expostulate with Henry upon
 " his determination to form an union without the con-
 " currence of his father ; but if my Lord can be
 " induced to approve of the choice his son has made,
 " I shall deem her an amiable acquisition to our fa-
 " mily."

" On my dear mother," said Miss Wilton, " let
 " us go to Bertram-Hall ; I long to embrace my
 " sister. Here is Benfield's letter, the perusal of
 " which will restore her to her health."

" My dear Antonet, let me caution you against
 " making too precipitate a discovery of this happy
 " incident ; her tender frame, at present, cannot
 " bear the violent transition from grief to joy. More-
 " over, you must excuse me for what will probably
 " seem a little rudeness,---I beg leave to decline
 " seeing Mr. Benfield."

" My dear mother, why so scrupulous ? How hath
 " Mr. Benfield offended ?"

" In nothing, my dear child. You know how I am
 " circumstanced--rest, both of you, assured of my un-
 " alterable

“alterable love. When you, my dear child, return
 “to Benfield-Hall, nothing shall deter me from an
 “early congratulation. As soon as Henry returns,
 “and I am certain of his honourable enlargement,
 “I shall set out for Wilton-Park.”

THE ladies returned in Sir Robert's carriage to Bertram-Hall. Olivia was up, for the first time since her confinement. When the ladies were announced, she arose to receive them; but Miss Wilton, running to her, clasped her in her arms, tenderly kissed her, and desired her to be seated.

“How is your brother, Miss Wilton?” said Olivia.

“VERY well, and very happy, my dear. You know, Olivia, I always suggested that this unhappy affair would ultimately terminate to our wishes.”

“WHY, what news, what fortunate circumstance has occurred, my dear lady? Keep me not a moment in suspense.”

“Be not fluttered—compose yourself.”

“WHAT happy event,” exclaimed Lady Bertram, “hath taken place?”

“COME, Lady Wilton, (interrupted Olivia) produce the letter.”

OLIVIA took the letter, and read it with much composure; then, reaching it to Lady Bertram, she clasped her hands, and casting her eyes up to heaven, poured forth the fervour of her heart in private ejaculations to the God of all Mercy, for his superintending

ing care over the children of innocence. Their feelings on the occasion were tender and delicate, their congratulations mutual and consolatory ; and nothing seemed to be wanting to complete their happiness, but the company of the three absent gentlemen.

IN the mean time Sir Robert and Mr. Wilton travelled with all imaginable expedition ; and upon their arrival at Northallerton immediately drove to the inn, and enquired for Mr. Benfield. They were ushered into the room where he and Mr. Fennell were.

MR. WILTON embraced his friend with a true and affectionate tenderness, and thanked him for his activity and resolution in securing the man who, by a villainous train of diabolical machinations, had sought to take away his life.

MR. FENNELL, overwhelmed with confusion at this unexpected interview, turned his face from this little circle of friendship, and groaned in the agony of despair.

SIR ROBERT, addressing himself to him, said, “ I wish not, Sir, to insult you in your misfortunes, but what infernal motive could stimulate you to pursue the life of Mr. Wilton by so deep-contrived an imposture ? ”

“ You insult me, Sir Robert,” answered Mr. Fennell, “ by your presence ; I owe you no obedience, and I scorn to answer any of your interrogatories.”

“ MR. FENNELL,” said Mr. Wilton, “ what injury from me could provoke you to such a procedure ? ”

“ You

“ You would have robbed me of my peace, destroyed
“ my happiness, and bereaved me of a treasure which
“ the world could not have restored.”

“ You may triumph over me in my present fallen
“ state ; but I hate, despise, and curse you. Ask
“ nothing more ; you know my mind.” In uttering
this sentence he gnashed his teeth, and cast a horrid
glance, first on one, then on the other ; and lastly,
covering his face with his hands, and bowing his
body, rested his head upon his knees.

REMAINING sullen, stubborn and silent, and re-
fusing to answer another syllable, Mr. Benfield said,
“ I hope, Mr. Wilton, you will adopt the remedy
“ which the laws of your country afford you, and
“ teach Mr. Fennell the danger of wantonly sport-
“ ing with the liberty and life of a Briton.”

“ THE turpitude,” replied Mr. Wilton, “ of
“ Mr. Fennell’s conduct shall not become a prece-
“ dent for mine. He has penalty enough to pay,
“ from the compunctions of his own conscience. The
“ only mode of treating a base action is to encrease
“ the poignancy of reflection, by contrasting it with the
“ generosity of revenge ; a revenge which leads the
“ mind to pity, but not to punish the actor. Mr. Fen-
“ nell therefore hath no prosecution to dread from me,
“ either to restrain the liberty of his person or to injure
“ his property. Come, gentlemen, let us return.”

“ I HAVE some business of importance,” said Sir
Robert, “ to transact with a gentleman who lives a
“ few miles distant ; and as I am thus far south, I
“ shall take this opportunity of doing it : I shall there-
“ fore beg your patience until I write a few lines to
“ Lady

“ Lady Bertram, which I hope you will deliver to
“ her either to-night or early to-morrow morning.”

MR. WILTON having received the letter, he entered Mr. Benfield's carriage, and set out for Bertram-Hall; whilst Sir Robert at the same time set forward to the South in a post-chaise and four.

THE day following, Mr. Wilton and Mr. Benfield arrived at Bertram-Hall. The ladies were in the drawing-room, and Olivia, by the kind assistance of her friends, was enabled to accompany them. As soon as the gentlemen were announced, Lady Wilton withdrew, and immediately Mr. Wilton and his friend entered. Olivia arose, but was prevented from meeting Mr. Wilton by his eagerness, and her own weakness and trepidation. He embraced her affectionately, and tenderly enquired after the state of her health.

MR. BENFIELD and Antonet were locked in each other's arms, pouring out the warmest effusions of love and friendship.

“ HEY-DEY,” said Lady Bertram, “ here is such
“ billing, sighing, and embracing! 'Faith I wish I had
“ my turtle-dove: pray, Mr. Wilton, where is he?”

“ LADY BERTRAM, I humbly beg your pardon.
“ The joy of seeing my Olivia able to quit her chamber made me forget to deliver you this letter.”

“ WHAT! Sir Robert gone a hundred miles farther than Northallerton on special business! Ladies
“ and Gentlemen, you seem to be so perfectly well
“ satisfied with the company of each other, that I
“ shall

"shall beg leave of absence; but, pray inform me
"how you left Mr. Fennell?"

"INDEED, Lady Bertram," said Mr. Wilton,
"though to all appearance very infirm, he was sul-
"len and ill-natured, and told us he hated, despised,
"and cursed us."

"HEAVENS, what a devil!" exclaimed Lady
Bertram; "but what have you done with him?"

"LEFT him, Madam, to the remorse of his own
"mind."

"THE severest punishment," observed Olivia,
"you can inflict upon so worthless a miscreant."

LADY BERTRAM having withdrawn, Mr. Benfield
proposed an immediate decampment to Scotland with
Antonet, as the only effectual method to secure their
happiness and complete their union.

"WHY so precipitate, Benfield? We are certainly
"here out of the reach of pursuit?"

"WHY, my Antonet, do you now hesitate? We
"have now the power which we have long wished for;
"and remember a father's authority is superior to a
"lover's. You have been pursued in your flight;
"should your pursuers gain intelligence of the place
"of your refuge, what must be the consequence?
"A cruel separation, probably, never more to
"meet."

"TO-DAY, Mr. Benfield, you have had a long
"journey; you must be fatigued."

"Not

"Not in the least, my love. Consent, and let us go to-day."

"MR. BENFIELD," said Mr. Wilton, "why do you attempt to persuade my sister to undertake what she is already resolved upon? Has she not travelled, or rather fled, near three hundred miles, solely with a view to accomplish what my father lately disappointed her of? Send to Morpeth for post-horses; and if she refuse to accompany your flight to Scotland, may she never be a wife until the number the years of her old aunt Manby!"

"So, so, brother, you are now in a jesting mood; I am happy to see that you have recovered your vivacity; and assure you I will endeavour to frustrate your wish."

MR. BENFIELD walked out, and immediately dispatched a servant to Morpeth for horses. In the mean time Lady Bertram entered, and, addressing Miss Wilton, said, "What are you musing upon; where is your dying swain?"

"She is, Madam," replied Mr. Wilton, "consigning over the marriage ceremony, and looking on which finger the ring is to be placed; for you must know, she is to be married before she sleeps."

"WHAT, married to-night, Miss Wilton!" said Lady Bertram, laughing; "you are in a wonderful hurry!"

Poor Antonet blushed, and turning to Olivia said, "My dear sister, protect me from the raillery of those good people; I am actually unable to defend myself."

MR. BENFIELD entered, and Miss Wilton withdrew to Lady Wilton, who was preparing to leave Bertram-Hall the next morning.

HER mother being made acquainted with the resolution they had taken, she said, whilst the tear trickled down her aged cheeks, "My dear child; may the God of Heaven bless and protect you! You have now the prospect of being happily united to the man upon whom you have long fixed your heart. Remember to follow the instructions, as a wife, which you have learned as a daughter. Let your behaviour to your husband be dutiful, respectful, and amiable; your attention to him unceasing; and your kindness invariable. Connive at, rather than reprehend, any trifling improprieties, for such will sometimes happen in the married state betwixt the most cautious and prudent. If any little oversight incur a rebuke, let not the petulance of your answer irritate, when your affability ought to appease. Judge with candour of every fault; for mutual recrimination is certain to engender contention and strife, which ought to be avoided with the utmost precaution. Let not your home have the least part of your company; for where a husband is forsaken, and a family neglected, for extraneous delights and foreign amusements, coolness ensues, indifference produces dislike, and jealousies embitter every hour.

"HOWEVER ample your income, attend to your own disbursements: this by the giddy will be deemed avaricious, but by the wise economical. Mr. Benfield's fortune is large: whatever splendor or magnificence you support, let it be with dignity. Avoid every species of dissipation, as productive of immorality; and gaming, in a lady, is one of the first steps to vice.

"HAVE

“ HAVE no private parties, no pleasures but what
“ your husband, if he chuse, may participate ; for
“ constant separate amusements may produce suspi-
“ cion, and destroy your quiet.

“ THE conduct which I advise you to pursue must
“ ensure your happiness, and induce a mutual return
“ of kindness from any man of sensibility or dis-
“ cernment. But even if you should not meet with a
“ reciprocation of tenderesses and good offices, re-
“ member, and let me caution you, that it is still your
“ indispensable duty to act your part with cheerful-
“ ness and good-nature ; for the errors of the husband
“ are no precedents to the wife ; and retaliation will
“ certainly render you contemptible here and misera-
“ ble hereafter.

“ THESE and a variety of other precepts of a simi-
“ lar tendency I have constantly inculcated from
“ your earliest years ; let it therefore be your daily
“ study to act in conformity with them, which will
“ endear you to your husband, and make you re-
“ spected and beloved by all the wise and good in
“ every rank of life.”

“ MY dear mother, let me upon my knees return
“ you unfeigned thanks. This good counsel I shall
“ imprint upon my heart ; and all your instructions,
“ I hope, I shall long remember, ever endeavouring
“ to practise them with that attention which is due
“ to the much-revered, the much-beloved author.”

A SERVANT who waited informed Miss Wilton that
the chaise was ready. “ Antonet,” said Lady Wilton,
“ probably before I see you again, you will have
“ acquired a nearer relation than that of a mother.
“ Let not the love for a husband cause you to forget
“ the tenderess of a parent. Be as dutiful a wife

“ as you have been a daughter, and despair not of
“ being happy. The chaise waits—one embrace—
“ farewell !”

THE heart of Miss Wilton overflowed with a gentle sorrow ; she could make no reply, but hurried out of the room, and hastily bidding adieu to Lady Bertram, Olivia, and her brother, who handed her into the chaise, she waved one hand to her mother, who stood at the window, and wiped her tears away with the other : the chaise drove off, and they were out of sight in a few minutes.

MR. WILTON passed the remainder of the day with the ladies, and towards the evening retired to his Hermitage to pass the night. Here he was received by the worthy family with every demonstration of heart-felt joy, who expressed their satisfaction at the defeat of Mr. Fennell's villainy. But no congratulations were more real than those of the grateful Mrs. Moreton, who, being informed of the whole transaction, had waited several hours in anxious expectation of seeing Mr. Wilton, and poured out the effusions of her heart for his life and future safety.

HE received these testimonies of friendship with kindness and gratitude ; not despising the benevolence of poverty, nor the good wishes of those in an humble station, convinced that they are often more real than the unmeaning compliments and promises customary among the higher ranks of life.

IN the morning he walked to Bertram-Hall, where he found his venerable parent prepared for her departure, and only waiting to bid him adieu. He offered to accompany her part of her journey, to which she objected, saying, “ No, Henry, your presence
“ may

" may be of service towards restoring the health of
 " your future bride ; it can be of none to me, except
 " prolonging the pang of separation. Remember,
 " Henry, it is your duty to solicit, the first oppor-
 " tunity, your father's blessing and forgiveness. If
 " he continue implacable, let not his implacability
 " be an example for your ingratitude. He is your
 " father ; and though, from a just provocation, he
 " may have swerved from the path of christian pa-
 " tience, yet you owe him every duty that a son can
 " owe to a parent. He has done more for you, by rear-
 " ing and protecting your infancy, by diligently lead-
 " ing you up to maturity, by instilling into your tea-
 " der mind the principles of virtue and religion, and
 " by bestowing upon you a liberal education, than all
 " your obedience and attention can ever recompense."

" You are now going to take a partner for life. The
 " Lady is worthy of your choice, and would add dig-
 " nity to any family. Sir Robert's bounty is magnificent
 " indeed ; equal, if not superior, to your father's ex-
 " pectations from Sir George Silvertop. From your
 " knowledge of life, and the well-known acquisi-
 " tions of your mind, I can have little to add rela-
 " tive to the duties of a husband. Let your first care
 " and attention be paid to the partner of your soul.
 " Assiduity will encourage and keep alive the lam-
 " bent flame of love ; but indifference will un-
 " doubtedly extinguish it. Impart every wish ; let
 " her share in your joys and participate of your sor-
 " rows ; for, believe me, no one is so proper for the
 " tender charge as the wife of your bosom. She
 " will alleviate, assuage, and console you, while
 " the sneers of a jovial companion, or the scoffs of
 " a sunshine friend, would only add to the bitterness
 " of your woe."

LADY BERTRAM and Olivia entered, to wish their venerable guest a prosperous journey. She continued :
“ Lady Bertram, your civilities have made a deep
“ impression in my breast, which will not be soon or
“ easily obliterated ; for which I hope you will ac-
“ cept my most grateful acknowledgements, until
“ your kindness afford me a proper opportunity of
“ making a suitable return. Olivia, the next time
“ I see you, I hope to be united to you by a nearer
“ tie than that of friendship. May your days be
“ crowned with happiness, your head with age, and
“ Henry enjoy your unvarying love to the last mo-
“ ment of your existence !”

SHE then tenderly embraced Olivia, and recommended her to the gracious protection of Providence. Olivia could only answer her by tenderly bedewing her aged cheek with the tears of sensibility. She then embraced her son, bidding him, next to his Creator, to reverence his father ; it was a duty, she said, which no earthly consideration could dispense with.

“ LET this embrace, Lady Bertram, cement a
“ friendship that is only to be dissolved when our
“ time has run its course.”

THE carriage being ready, Lady Wilton left her companions suffused in the gentle feelings of a tender sorrow, unable to return her benevolence or utter a last farewell. She was conducted to the carriage by her grateful son, who visibly felt the pang of separation from his amiable parent, which he in vain attempted to conceal.

WHEN he returned to the ladies, the eyes of Olivia were still glistening with the drops of tenderness ; but Lady Bertram had recovered her usual serenity.

nity, and she accosted Mr. Wilton by saying, "Had
" not the forehead of Lady Wilton been wrinkled by
" the venerable hand of Time, I should have con-
" cluded her to be an angel that was sent from above
" to spread benignity and love amongst the thought-
" less children of this world. Olivia, what blessings
" await you from your approaching affinity with so
" much goodness !"

" LADY BERTRAM, what your goodness and friend-
" ship have instilled, will be matured by the expe-
" rience and wisdom of Lady Wilton, but never;
" never can be forgotten."

MR. WILTON passed most of his time at Bertram-Hall, in the company of Olivia, whose health received additional vigour by his attendance and assiduity. On the third day from their departure, Mr. Benfield and his bride returned from their visit to the shrine of Hymen on the banks of the Tweed. Pleased with the certainty of Olivia's increasing health, they made only a momentary call, and set out immediately for Benfield-Hall.

A FEW days after Sir Robert arrived late in the evening. The morning following Mr. Wilton paid his usual visit. It was near eleven o'clock, Olivia was walking in the garden. He joined her, and was informed that Sir Robert was come home. They retired to the arbour of woodbine, and were pleasing themselves with the recital of past sorrows, and enjoying their future happiness by anticipation, when a servant came and informed them that Sir Robert waited for their company. They arose with alacrity to pay their respects to their common benefactor. They walked into the room hand in hand, and, without observing particularly another gentleman present, ran to congratulate Sir

Robert on his return, when Mr. Wilton, turning to address the stranger, exclaimed with wonder, "Sir George Silvertop!" while he stood fixed in amazement, and overwhelmed with confusion.

THE exclamation caused Olivia to fix her eyes upon the gentleman---she grew pale in an instant---trembled---and faintly screaming, "Heavens, my father!" fell lifeless into the arms of Mr. Wilton.

"I WAS afraid of this, Lady Bertram," said Sir Robert; "but you wished to try if she knew Sir George after so long an absence."

"PARDON me, Sir Robert; forgive me, Sir George; I apprehended no danger. Thou suffering angel, look upon me, and forgive me!--She opens her eyes--God be praised!"

RECOVERING her strength, OLIVIA dropped upon her knees before Sir George, saying, "Will an honoured, an injured parent forgive his undutiful daughter?"

SIR GEORGE SILVERTOP, kneeling and tenderly embracing his daughter, exclaimed, "My child, you shall not kneel alone—I ought to ask forgiveness.—Heaven is all gracious, and its dispensations are unsearchable! May this be the happy prelude to years of future peace! Rise, my child; your early afflictions shall be recompensed, your sufferings rewarded. You, Mr. Wilton, are the most instrumental in this restoration of a daughter to the arms of a dejected parent, by your rejection of my younger daughter, for which you are amply entitled not only to my warmest thanks, but even to the kindest effects of my beneficence; I therefore beg leave to add to
" the

“ the bounty of Sir Robert thirty thousand pounds,
 “ as a tribute due to the merit of a long lost child.”

“ Your munificence, gentlemen,” said Mr. Wilton, “ far surpasses my most sanguine expectation.
 “ It shall be my future study to be deserving of
 “ it.”

THE day of marriage being appointed, the intervening time was spent in the necessary preparations for the nuptials. When the morning arrived which was to unite this happy couple, already united by a reciprocal affection, Olivia, when approaching the holy altar, was surprized by the address of a stranger, who delivered a letter to her, and immediately retired. She put it into her pocket, and the ceremony was immediately performed. Upon the return of the company to Bertram-Hall, she opened the letter and perused it. She was visibly affected, the letter dropped from her hand, she begged to retire, and on Lady Bertram handing her out of the room, Mr. Wilton took the letter up, and read the contents to the company.

TO MISS OLIVIA BERTRAM.

MADAM,

THE day that unites you to my hated rival unites me to my grave. I have long, from your hate, led a life of misery ; it draws now to a termination. My emissary acquaints me, that you are to be married on Thursday at ten o'clock. Think, when before the altar, repeating the holy ceremony, that you hear the dreadful explosion which rends my soul from my body, and sends it cursing into an unknown eternity.

J. FENNELL.

“HEAVEN,” exclaimed Sir George, “in thy infinite mercy, pity his wretched soul !”

“His doom is fixed,” said Sir Robert, “before this ; I know his determined resolution. Let us go and endeavour to alleviate the anxiety into which the perusal of this dreadful billet hath thrown your amiable bride. His malice operates beyond the grave---this, I hope, is its last effort. May his soul find more peace than he wishes to leave behind him !”

ON entering the room, they found Olivia upon her knees, pouring forth her pious ejaculations to her Maker, to have mercy on this unthinking, mistaken man. When she arose, Mr. Wilton embraced her, and bid her not afflict herself with the consideration of Mr. Fennell’s unhappy fate, for his Creator was all-gracious, and might finally shew him mercy.

THEY all endeavoured to console her, and dissipate the melancholy which overspread her mind. Their assiduities were partly effectual ; and, in order to restore her wonted serenity, Sir George proposed a journey to his seat in Hertfordshire ; which proposal recalled to the recollection of Mr. Wilton his mother’s injunction, of soliciting, the first opportunity, his father’s forgiveness ; he therefore seconded Sir George’s proposal ; to which Olivia, Lady and Sir Robert Bertram readily acquiesced.

ON the third day after the marriage they left Bertram-Hall, and arrived safe, after an agreeable journey, at Sir George’s seat. The day following Sir George set out for Wilton-Park, and returned before dinner, in company with Lord and Lady Wilton. Mr. Wilton and Olivia being informed of their arrival,

val, requested the permission of an interview, that they might humbly solicit a blessing and forgiveness. Mr. Wilton and Olivia entered the drawing-room hand in hand, preceded by Sir George and Sir Robert Bertram. They walked forward, and fell upon their knees before Lord and Lady Wilton. Lord Wilton's countenance changed—the glance of rage darted from his eyes, and he arose abruptly, saying, “I thought, Sir George, you would not have had the audacity to affront me thus deliberately. You have duped me by a lie, inveigled me to your house, under the false pretence that my son was married to your daughter.”

“My Lord,” answered Sir George, “be patient; I am free from the guilt with which you accuse me. The lady who is kneeling at your feet, is actually my daughter by a prior wife. She lost her mother when she was six years of age. I married the present Lady Silvertop when she was eight. From some unhappy misunderstanding betwixt Lady Silvertop and the child, without any previous notice the latter left my house at ten years old, and took refuge with Sir Robert Bertram, the intimate and confidential friend of her mother. With a truly paternal care, Sir Robert and Lady Bertram have adopted and educated my child. You may remember, my Lord, hearing me frequently lament this misfortune as an affliction which had embittered my days, and poisoned my earthly cup with wretchedness and woe. Sir Robert, Lady Bertram, and Lady Silvertop, personally can vouch for the truth of my asseveration.”

“Sir George,” replied Lord Wilton, “I shall not dispute your veracity, nor call upon the ladies and gentlemen to perform the irksome task of vouching

“ vouching your integrity. Your character for
 “ uprightness and probity is too well established to
 “ be questioned ; and since my son hath married your
 “ daughter, if Miss Silvertop will forgive the insult
 “ I will pardon his disobedience. I vowed to re-
 “ ject him eternally, unless he married your daugh-
 “ ter ; that vow is now annihilated by his perform-
 “ ance of the condition.”

“ MY Lord,” said Lady Winton, “ take compas-
 “ sion on your sweet daughter, who is kneeling all
 “ this time at your feet.”

“ PARDON my inattention, daughter ;” then lay-
 ing his hands upon their heads, he added, “ Take
 “ my forgiveness, my children. May happiness be
 “ your portion in this life ; and in the next eternal
 “ felicity !”

THEY arose, and he kindly embraced them both,
 saying, “ You must apologize for your insult to Miss
 “ Silvertop.”

“ THAT, my father, is already done, and her for-
 “ giveness obtained.”

“ THERE remains nothing now, my Lord,”
 said Lady Bertram, “ to make the whole circle of
 “ your friends completely happy, except your par-
 “ don to another child.”

“ HA ! what of her, my Lady ?—Do you know
 “ where she hath taken refuge ?”

“ WHERE, my Lord, should she, but at Benfield-
 “ Hall, in the arms of its owner ! Nay, no frown,
 “ my Lord : be not chagrined : I will never cease
 “ soliciting

“ soliciting until I obtain forgiveness for your amiable daughter.”

“ You are, Lady Bertram,” replied Lord Wilton, “ an importunate suitor. My objections to Mr. Benfield were neither to his family nor his fortune ; but he was always haranguing against the authority of parents, and contradicting my opinions on most of my favourite topics.”

THE door opened, and Lady Wilton entered, leading her daughter Benfield by the hand, who knelt and asked her father’s forgiveness.

MR. BENFIELD followed her example.

“ No hesitation,” said Lady Bertram, “ or I shall kneel too, my Lord ; and what a ludicrous spectacle would it be, to see two ladies kneeling to one gentleman !”

“ THOUGH advanced in years, my Lady, I yet have too much gallantry to permit you to sue in vain. Rise, my children, and be as happy as your love and perseverance deserve.”

“ THIS reconciliation, my Lord,” said Mr. Benfield, “ completes my wishes ; yet, will you be so obliging as to acquaint me how you obtained the intelligence of our intended elopement ?”

LORD WILTON, pulling out a pocket-book, answered, “ That letter, which I found when I was courting in the vicinity of Benfield-Hall, the day before your appointment, will explain the mystery.”

“ It

“IT is your letter, my Antonet, containing the
“ hour of assignation ; which letter I unfortunately
“ lost.”

SIR GEORGE SILVERTOP, overjoyed at the restoration and honourable alliance of his daughter, invited the whole company to pass a few days with him, which were spent with all the harmony of good-nature, and the confidence of friendship.

MR. WILTON and his lovely bride, at the earnest solicitation of Sir Robert and Lady Bertram, consented to spend the first year of their marriage at Bertram-Hall.

MR. LONGFORD was no sooner informed of their marriage, than he sunk into a deep melancholy, by which he was totally lost to his friends and to society ; whilst Mrs. Moreton was unanimously chosen to be housekeeper at Bertram-Hall, during the continuance of Mr. Wilton and Olivia there ; and when they removed, she was to remove with them, and act in the same capacity.

THE END.

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